

THE INTERCULTURAL PROCESS OF CREATING *JINGJU* ADAPTATIONS OF  
WESTERN LITERATURE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the methods and process of creating *jingju* adaptations of Western Literature highlighted through five case studies: *Zhuli Xiaojie* (《朱丽小姐》 *Miss Julie*), *Xiaoli zhisi* (《小吏之死》 *The Little Servant Who Died*), *Woyicaike* (《沃伊采克》 *Woyzeck*), *Fushide* (《浮士德》 *Faust*), and *Shengmuyuan/Qingshang zhonglou* (《圣母院》 / 《情殇钟楼》 *Notre Dame de Paris*). These case studies presented unique and different challenges, which were solved with a variety of adaptation methods in pursuit of two unofficial but pervasive goals: 1) to creatively challenge and inspire *jingju* artists and 2) to bring in younger and new audiences in order to revitalize *jingju*.

In order to face the specific challenges for each production, the creative teams, made up of actors, playwrights, composers, directors, and set, costume, and lighting designers, utilized different methods of adaptation ranging from changing the cultural context from the West to China, to mixing Western and *jingju* conventions, to bending *jingju*'s Four Main Skills and role categories. The methods, utilized by the National China *Jingju* Company and the Shanghai *Jingju* Company, and the dynamics of their respective creative teams are analyzed via Marvin Carlson's Seven Intercultural Relationships, which highlights the varying relationships of intercultural theatre. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *jingju* practitioners are choosing to remain in the Chinese cultural context, creating *jingju* performances that revitalize *jingju* as a form of Cultural Nationalism, while also adhering to traditional *jingju* traditions and practices.

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### **A NOTE ON NAMES**

The names used in this dissertation will be written according to country of origin. Western names will be written with given name first then family name, while Chinese names will be given with family name first then given name.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

For reasons having to do with the future of *jingju* performance and the art form as a whole, both the Chinese government and individual leading artists involved have chosen to focus on adapting Western literature pieces to the *jingju* form. In order to explore the process of creating these intercultural performances, I have chosen to study: *Xiaoli zhisi* (小吏之死 *The Little Servant Who Died*), *Zhuli Xiaojie* (朱莉小姐 *Miss Julie*), *Shengmyuan/Qingshang zhonglou* (圣母院/情殇钟楼 *Notre Dame de Paris*), *Woyicaike* (沃伊采克 *Woyzeck*), and *Fushide* (浮士德 *Faust*). In the scope of a dissertation, it is not possible to assess the impact upon the future. Instead, I will look at the various methods used in order to overcome specific obstacles and perceived challenges. In doing so, I will apply Marvin Carlson's Seven Intercultural Relationships to examine the dynamics of the creative teams and the practical measures they utilized, including the Four Main Skills of actors, music, and mise en scene, by which I mean costumes, makeup, and scenery

### Justification and Past Research

On January 21, 2019, the National *Jingju* Company (NJC) based in Beijing, held the 2018 Annual Work Summary and Commendation Conference at the People's Theatre. In attendance were theatre leaders, government officials, including the deputy director of the Personnel Department of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The purpose of this meeting was to review the 2018 season and how well the company implemented the directives of the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress:

In the summary, Dean Song Chen said that in 2018, the theatre was guided by the spirit of the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. Under the leadership of the Party Group of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, it adhered to the people-centered creative



orientation and practiced “deep life and rooted in the people.” Grasping the relationship between inheritance and innovation...always keeping in mind the purpose of art for the people. Put social benefits first, focus on the main business, improve the quality of performances, and develop the performance market.<sup>1</sup>

There are at least two key points in Dean Song’s speech that I wish to elaborate on for the purposes of this dissertation: 1) Creating theatre for the people and 2) boosting the performance market.

Colin Mackerras, in *Chinese Drama: A Historical Survey*, writes that *xiqu* (戏曲, Chinese indigenous theatre) “has become very closely bound up with the lives of the ordinary people, a form which has functioned not only as entertainment but also teacher for all classes of society.”<sup>2</sup> The study of *jingju* development in English and Chinese has covered a vast portion of *xiqu* history. Tracking the evolution of Chinese theatre from the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD, scholars, including Mackerras and William Dolby, note that the earlier forms of what is now known as *xiqu* were made up of a broad range of performances, including acrobatics, music, songs, acting, and recitation.<sup>3</sup> As the country evolved, so did its theatre, growing from individual acts to cohesive single act plays to multiact plays. In later dynasties, different *xiqu* forms began to develop in each province and region, coalescing around a set of conventions and styles that appealed to the people of those provinces.

By the Republican Period, actually from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to 1949, *jingju* had developed into a major art form, which Fan Xing describes as “a complex tradition,”<sup>4</sup> and as Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak, quoting E.T. Kirby, as a “total theatre,”<sup>5</sup> defining it as “theatre as the place of intersection of all the arts.”<sup>6</sup> *Jingju*, as we know it, solidified prior to the time the Qing Dynasty fell in 1912. Joshua Goldstein, who covers Republican Era *jingju* in his book *Drama*

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<sup>1</sup>The National *Jingju* Theatre 2

<sup>2</sup> Mackerras 5

<sup>3</sup> Dolby 1

<sup>4</sup> Fan 7-8

<sup>5</sup> Kirby xiii, Wichman “*Listening*” 1

<sup>6</sup> Kirby xiii

*Kings*, provides his readers with a description and analysis of how the political circumstances of this time of transition affected the continual development of *jingju*. He points out that artists like the Four Great *Dan*—Mei Lanfang, Cheng Yanqiu, Shang Xiaoyun, and Xun Huisheng—created their own styles for performing the *dan*, the female Role Category, innovating upon a well-established base. Mei Lanfang, in particular, was well known for his innovations, creating new roles, role categories, and performances, as well as in the technical realm with new types of costumes and hair styles.

As a group, the Four Great *Dan* also took advantage of marketing and publicity to promote their work in both Shanghai and Beijing, sitting for photographs that were made into stamps or wrappings for everyday items, such as cigarettes.<sup>7</sup> These items, Goldstein points out, brought *jingju* into the homes of potential and current audiences, further building up the celebrity status of these four men.<sup>8</sup>

In her article, “Brokering Glory for the Chinese Nation: Peking Opera’s 1930 American Tour,” Nancy Guy analyzes Mei Lanfang’s tour to America at a time when the Chinese government knew it needed to promote itself after a series of military defeats and lack of respect overseas.<sup>9</sup> The international tour that hyped China’s “exotic” culture also worked to establish *jingju* as the national theatre form starring its most famous actor, Mei Lanfang. Mei’s tours to the United States and to Europe were major successes because they raised China’s esteem in both Western and Chinese eyes, which, Guy notes, was one of the main goals of the tour.

In the 1980s and 1990s, after ten years *geming xiandai jingju yangbanxi* (革命现代京剧样板戏), or Model Modern Revolutionary *jingju*) performed during the Great Proletarian

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<sup>7</sup> Goldstein 203

<sup>8</sup> Goldstein 202-203

<sup>9</sup> Guy, “Brokering Glory” 382

Cultural Revolution, *jingju* companies turned toward adapting Shakespeare into *xiqu*. This practice, as Li Ruru and Alexa Huang detail in their books, *Shashibiya* and *Chinese Shakespeares*, respectively, had become popular in the early 1900s with Chinese students who had been studying in Tokyo, utilizing a book of synopsis of Shakespeare's plays by Mary and Charles Lamb and translated by Lin Shu (林纾).<sup>10</sup> Alexa Huang,<sup>11</sup> in her research on intercultural performance theory and *jingju* adaptations of Shakespeare, makes two points about why *jingju* adaptations have become more and more common. First, Huang points to locality criticism, which is determined by the location(s) of the audience, the location of the play, and any feelings about that specific playwright. Huang states that locality criticism helps with understanding the interaction between audience and text -- in this case, the relationship between a Western playwright and China. By stating that "elements of cultural politics, nationalism, revolution, and postmodernism form a prominent set of subtexts in which Shakespeare and China are read," Huang argues that the history of the audience and/or of the playwright's relationship with that specific country and audience will affect subsequent interpretations of different productions of that play and by that playwright in China.<sup>12</sup>

Second, Huang lays out for her readers the idea of "other Shakespeares as a theoretical problem,"<sup>13</sup> through which Huang looks at cultural appropriation, especially in terms of "becoming aware of other Shakespeares, the othering of Shakespeare, and the linguistic and political diaspora of Shakespeare."<sup>14</sup> Huang acknowledges that interpretations of Shakespeare are dependent upon the viewer's own background and locations, so it is vital that the meta-critical be

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<sup>10</sup> Li, Ruru *Shashibiya* 13

<sup>11</sup> Then known as Alexander Huang.

<sup>12</sup> Huang 34

<sup>13</sup> Huang 29

<sup>14</sup> Huang 29

employed in analyzing these performances, and that historical modes of inquiry be utilized as well, to create a more complete picture of the factors that go into creating a Chinese Shakespeare.<sup>15</sup>

The innovative successes that *jingju* companies have had in their quest to “awaken the spirit of the people and renew and reinvigorate the culture”<sup>16</sup> with Shakespeare having dominated the discussion concerning *jingju* adaptation of Western literature, especially in English scholarship. However, since the 1990s, the popularity of *jingju* has fallen off especially with younger potential audiences. Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak addresses these issues in her article, “‘Reform’ at the Shanghai *Jingju* Company and Its Impact on Creative Authority and Repertory,” analyzing the steps that the Shanghai *Jingju* Company (SJC) have taken not only to reinvigorate current and older audiences but also bring in younger audiences through school shows that teach students about *jingju*, such as with performances of *The Cave of the Coiled Webs*, an innovative new *jingju* play about the Monkey King’s adventures with a Spider Spirit.

Shouhua Qi writes in *Adapting Classics for the Chinese Stage* that the need for adaptation comes from a quest for survival.<sup>17</sup> To that end, companies like the National *Jingju* Theatre in Beijing and the Shanghai *Jingju* Company in Shanghai have been looking toward adapting Western authors and playwrights for their stages, looking to appeal to university students and young adults who otherwise might be more drawn to television or film. According to the majority of *jingju* artists I interviewed, the adaptation of Western playwrights and authors beyond Shakespeare is seen as important to the growth and development of *jingju*,<sup>18</sup> not only in terms of creativity but also because it is a natural progression. However, published discussions

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<sup>15</sup> Huang 29

<sup>16</sup> Qi xiii

<sup>17</sup> Qi xiii

<sup>18</sup> D.Liu; Dong; Wang; Shi; Yan, Interview L. Liu

reflecting these sentiments are difficult to find in English and even harder to find in Chinese sources, if one does not rely on blog posts. In English, Li Ruru's article, "The Market, Ideology, and Convention: *Jingju* Performers' Creativity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," points to the development of new *jingju* performances, such as *Shengmuyuan (Notre-Dame de Paris)*, as a way of touching modern audiences on an emotional level, even though they might not have the same in-depth knowledge as audiences who have been watching *jingju* for a long time.<sup>19</sup>

In my view, it is time to consolidate analysis of *jingju* adaptation of Western literature. Not only because *jingju* companies are branching out more and more into non-Shakespearean Western plays and other literature but also because an analysis of these plays regarding China's relationship in the world has become necessary. Using Marvin Carlson's Seven Intercultural Relationships to analyze these five adaptations provides a way of examining China's relationship with the world on a cultural and artistic/aesthetic level, rather than just in terms of political policy.

### *Intercultural Theatre Models*

In analyzing *jingju* productions that are based on non-Chinese sources, the crucial areas for exploration include: the dynamics of the creative teams; the elements that were included in the adaptation and the extent of their inclusion; and how that production was intended to resonate with various types of audiences, which include a range of *jingju* knowledge, age, and ethnicities. Undertaking this analysis therefore requires an examination of leading Intercultural theatre models, and a consideration of how each model might accommodate the multiple cultures, elements, and productions involved in this study.

Patrice Pavis introduced the Hourglass Model in his 1991 book, *Theatre at the Crossroads*. Pavis summarizes the Hourglass Model thusly:

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<sup>19</sup>R. Liu "The Market" 148

In the upper bowl is the foreign culture, the source culture, which is more or less codified and solidified in diverse anthropological, sociocultural or artistic modelizations. In order to reach us, this culture must pass through the narrow neck. If the grains of culture or their conglomerate are sufficiently fine, they will flow through without any trouble, however slowly, into the lower bowl, that of the target culture. The grains will rearrange themselves in a way which appears random, but which is partly regulated by their passage through some dozen filters put in place by the target culture and the observer.<sup>20</sup>

Per Pavis' description and Figure 1 below, the Hourglass focuses on the process of adaptation, the creation of one performance as it moves from one idea, or a source culture, to its final product that would appeal to the target culture. This accommodates many performances that are called "intercultural," but does not easily accommodate analysis of collaboration between source and target cultures (Fig 1).<sup>21</sup> Pavis writes in his book that the Hourglass is supposed to accommodate any obstacles that might arise during the intercultural adaptation process. But the world is getting smaller, and the Hourglass does not allow for the incorporation of multiple cultures and cultural elements becoming absorbed into one performance.

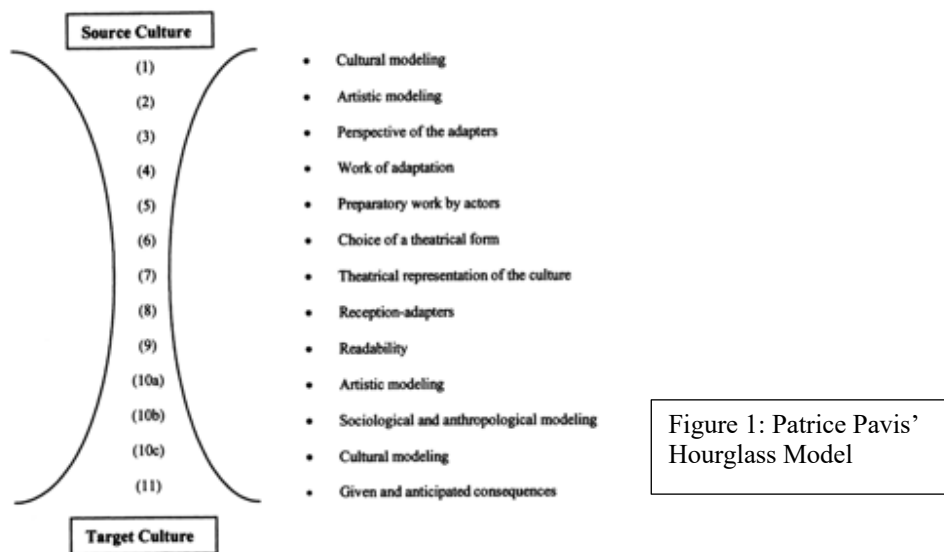
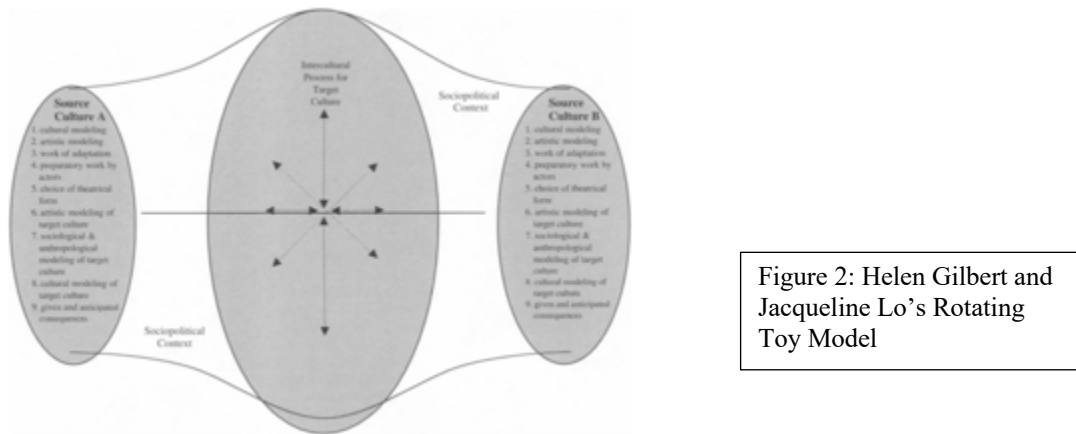


Figure 1: Patrice Pavis' Hourglass Model

<sup>20</sup> Pavis, Patrice. "Crossroads," 4

<sup>21</sup> Lo; Gilbert. "Topography" 42

In response to Pavis' Hourglass Model, Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo created their own model, which I call the Rotating Toy Model (Fig 2).<sup>22</sup>



Based on a toy both women played with as children, this model allows for the presence of two source cultures and one target culture. The mechanics of the toy allow for the inner disc, or the target culture, to move towards each source culture depending on how much tension is placed on the “strings,” or sociopolitical context, thus creating the space needed for discussion between the different cultures. However, again, an issue arises when there are more than two sources and more than one target culture with places in the negotiation of the creative process.

The Intercultural Theater work of Marvin Carlson, Professor of Performance Studies at CUNY New York, is, what I call, “generally specific,” meaning that his work, while specific in terms of analyzing the dynamics of performance and its effects on different cultures and audiences, is general and broad enough to provide the flexibility one needs to analyze many different types of performance. The inherent flexibility of Carlson’s model allows for the possibility of more than one source and target cultures.

<sup>22</sup> Lo; Gilbert “Topography” 45

In his article “Brook and Mnouchkine: Passages to India?” Carlson analyzes Peter Brook’s *Mahabharata* and Arianne Mnouchkine’s *L’Indiade*, two different performances that revolved around an Indian-Western negotiation. He introduces what he describes as a “series of stages between the categories of the culturally familiar and the culturally foreign,”<sup>23</sup> which I will refer to as the Seven Intercultural Relationships (Fig. 3). Each relationship represents the “degree to which a target culture absorbs the distinctive features of the culture from which it derives material,”<sup>24</sup> with each stage moving from the familiar to the foreign.

Stage One	The totally familiar tradition of regular performance. My example: a traditional <i>jingju</i> performance
Stage Two	Foreign elements are assimilated into the tradition and absorbed by it. The audience can be interested, entertained, or stimulated by these elements, but they are not challenged by them. The elements are not often recognized as foreign.
Stage Three	Entire foreign structures are assimilated into the tradition instead of isolated elements. Example: <i>Jingju</i> Shakespeare productions
Stage Four	The foreign and the familiar create a new blend, which is then assimilated into the tradition, becoming familiar Carlson’s Example: “Moliere’s use of <i>commedia dell’arte</i> ”
Stage Five	The foreign itself becomes assimilated as a whole, and becomes familiar Carlson’s example: “Italian opera in England, Western films in Japan.”
Stage Six	Foreign elements remain foreign, used within familiar structures for <i>verfremdung</i> , for shock value Carlson’s examples: The recent <i>yangbanxi</i> movement sequence in the revival of David Henry Hwang’s <i>M. Butterfly</i> .
Stage Seven	An entire performance from another culture is imported or re-created with no attempt to accommodate it to the familiar.

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<sup>23</sup> Carlson 82

<sup>24</sup> Carlson 82



	My example: the 2016 tour of <i>jingu</i> performances in the United States <sup>25</sup>
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Figure 4: Marvin Carlsons's Seven Relationships of Intercultural

In his analysis of Mnouchkine's *L'Indiade*, Carlson judges this performance to be at stages two or three, but closer to two "in terms of the culturally familiar and culturally foreign being still much closer to traditional appropriation of foreign elements and motifs than to a true intercultural creation."<sup>26</sup>

Carlson supports his assessment by describing the performances themselves and the environments that were built up around them. Like Mei Lanfang's tour of the 1930s, Carlson writes that audiences were immediately brought into the environment of Mnouchkine's *L'Indade*, where patrons were brought into a cluster of lit buildings and served authentic Indian food and assisted by ushers wearing Indian clothing in the lobby of Théâtre du Soleil, which was also decorated with a large map of India.<sup>27</sup> This type of immersion, in my opinion, presents a form of exoticism that, while drawing people into a performance, does more harm than good because it satisfies the will and artistic drive of the creator, while exploiting the source culture, in this case, India. Mnouchkine's performance, Carlson states, *suggests* India.<sup>28</sup> It does not *represent* India, which is why he placed this performance at a Relationship Two or a Relationships Three.

The Seven Intercultural Relationships, demonstrated by Mnouchkine's performance and the examples provided in Figure 3, is a model that does not assess the production by its process of creation, but by the final performance. This method allows for more flexibility in my analysis

<sup>25</sup> Carlson 82-83

<sup>26</sup> Carlson 83

<sup>27</sup> Carlson 86

<sup>28</sup> Carlson 90

because I could look at a performance and its specific elements -- including plot construction, the use of The Four Skills, music, costumes and makeup, sets, and lighting-- as a whole and place it at a specific stage from where I could analyze the production on its own as well as a part of a trend.

### **Areas of Examination**

#### **Jingju Convention**

In order to really analyze and understand each production, it is important to first lay out the basic performance conventions that characterize *jingju*. Each convention can be altered to fit specific productions, but the guiding principle must always remain the same: *jingju*'s highly codified and stylized performance must express the "essence of real experiences and prod[uce] dramatic effect."<sup>29</sup> In other words, *jingju*'s conventions, which can be modified as appropriate, must reflect a believable experience and resonate with audiences because of the heightened reality they convey. Wichmann-Walczak states that "in the broadest sense, conventions (程式 *chengshi*) are an aspect of stylization; conventions are also departures from reality."<sup>30</sup> Li says that the concept of convention in *jingju* is "both concrete and abstract":

abstract because it is the aesthetic concept underpinning *jingju*'s core attributes, such as a codified acting/musical system and its categorization of role types. It becomes concrete in *jingju*'s stage techniques: performers of every role sub-type must learn many sets of stipulated techniques, including styles of singing, facial expressions, and movements of eyes, fingers, hands, arms, feet, and legs. Each play has uniquely formulated conventions for presenting its plot, characters and their feelings under specific circumstances. These conventions are not only valuable assets of the genre, but also carry emotional weight.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Wilcox "Meaning in Movement" 51

<sup>30</sup> Wichmann "Listening" 5.

<sup>31</sup> R. Li "Soul" 56.

Aesthetically, *jingju* is often compared to Chinese painting, whose aesthetic aim is to “write (or draw or paint) the meaning” (洗衣 *xiyi*) rather than “write realistically” (写实 *xieshi*).<sup>32</sup> *Jingju* performers believe that this concept is similar to their own aesthetic aim, where the stage is a blank canvas on which performers and elements come together to resemble life, instead of realistically portraying life. Actors work to capture the spirit of the life and emotions of the character they portray through the Four Main Skills: Singing (唱 *chang*), Speaking (念 *nian*), Dance-Acting (做 *zuo*), and Combat (打 *da*). Through these Skills, actors are able to externalize the emotions of the major characters they are playing and emphasize those feelings through vocalization, physical actions, and interactions with other characters. Wichmann-Walczak points out that everything on the stage needs to be beautiful, or *mei* (美), even if a particular character is described as being ugly, <sup>33</sup> writing that,

The demand for beauty also affects the portrayal of certain emotions...and actually affects the display of every performance skill. When skills are not displayed adequately--when strain or effort is noticeable--the build to an overall effect capable of conveying the essence of life rather than its mere resemblance is destroyed by the evident, un-beautiful actuality of a struggling performer.<sup>34</sup>

Physically, the drive for *mei* influences how a character reacts to a piece of news, whether it be good or bad. The demand for everything to be beautiful is achieved through three aesthetic principles: synthesis, stylization, and convention. When woven together, these create the basic fabric of a *jingju* performance, which also determines how a performance is created and received by audiences. This is often demonstrated in the visual elements of *jingju*, but it is also important aurally as well because everything in *jingju* must not only look beautiful, but come together

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<sup>32</sup> Wichmann “Listening” 2.

<sup>33</sup> Wichmann “Listening” 2

<sup>34</sup> Wichmann “Listening” 3

beautifully as a total theatre, in which all elements and skills seamlessly intersect with each other.<sup>35</sup>

### Role Categories

Within the world of *jingju*, there are four main role categories: *sheng* (male), *dan* (female), *hualian* (painted face males), and *chou* (clown). Each is split up into sub-categories that determine the age and social level of the character. The specific sub-category also determines the makeup and costume the character will wear throughout a performance, and the props that they will use.

Early on in the training process, the student is assigned a role category based on natural vocal range, body type, and how well he or she performed during their *gongfu*, or basic, training. At the same time, the students are assigned to a sub-category, which also determines which skills the actor will specialize in. The determination of a specific subcategory does not mean that the actor will continuously play the same role over and over again because each subcategory has its strong and weak, intelligent and stupid, and good and bad traditional characters. For each grouping, however, there are certain patterns 规律 (*guilǜ*), both physical and vocal, that have developed to signify the age and gender of that sub-category.<sup>36</sup>

### Sheng (生)

The *sheng* role category is comprised of dignified male characters, men who are high in social status or, if of low status, are deserving of a higher one. This role category is split into three subcategories: *laosheng* (老生 older male), *wusheng* (武生 martial male), and *xiaosheng*

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<sup>35</sup> Wichmann “Listening” 1.

<sup>36</sup> R. Li, “Soul” 67

*Laosheng* characters tend to be scholars, statesmen, and faithful retainers, usually representing characters over 30 years old. Sometimes fate or the variances of fortune that have been determined by the plot of the story have left them in a position of lower status, however, their moral judgments and ethics rarely waiver and they are often called upon to help when a crisis arises, making them worthy of the respect they are given by the other characters. *Laosheng* characters speak and sing in what is called a “large” or “natural” (真声 *zhensheng*) voice, in contrast to a falsetto voice. A *laosheng* always appears on stage with a beard (髯口 *rankou*) that is attached to the face by two hooks that are placed around the ears. The beard, made from horse hair, rests on the upper lip, and therefore requires unique vocal skills in order to be heard through the hair. Beards come in different colors to signify the age of the characters: a black beard indicates a man of at least 30 years of age, a grey beard indicates a man in his 50s to 60s, and a white beard signifies a very old *laosheng* character. Each beard is split into three parts: two sideburns and a center portion. This allows for easy manipulation of the beard for dramatic effect, following prescribed patterns. For footwear, *laosheng* wear thick-soled boots (*hou di xue*) that serve to enhance the character’s height and their elegant gait, lending a solidity to their steps that is an essential part of the personality of a *laosheng*. A very recognizable part of a *laosheng*’s costume is the floor-length silk robe that he wears, usually a court robe (*mang*), a long formal robes (*pi*), or an informal robe (*xuezi*).<sup>37</sup> All three types of robes come with water sleeves (*shuixiu*), twelve to eighteen-inch white silk extensions that are usually folded at the wrist when at rest, but can be dropped at any time to perform a physical movement or pattern. The water sleeves can also be used to emphasize specific words or emotions. The costumes of these

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<sup>37</sup> Bonds 3.

characters are made complete with a fabric headdress, which often signifies the status and profession of the character. The makeup of a *laosheng* is generally simple, with a pale base, black rimmed eyes and eyebrows that rise sharply. A peach colored makeup around the eyes serves to highlight them. Some of this peach make up is also used to create a streak rising up from the eyebrows onto the forehead, a makeup convention called *tongtianpao* that signifies male strength.

The *xiaosheng* are male characters who are younger than 30 years old and unmarried or just recently married. Their makeup is similar to that of the *laosheng*, but in pinker tones. The two main subcategories of this role type are the *wenxiaosheng* (civil young male) and the *wuxiaosheng* (martial young male). All *xiaosheng* characters speak and sing in a unique voice that goes back and forth between the “large” or “natural” voice, and the “small” or “falsetto” voice.

The *wenxiaosheng* include young scholars, lovers, and princes. While *wenxiaosheng* characters wear the same types of robes as do *laosheng* characters, theirs are generally in pastel colors and often embroidered with flowers or other images from nature. These robes also have water sleeves and are paired with high-soled boots and a fabric headdress.<sup>38</sup>

The *wusheng* are valiant generals and warriors. Like *laosheng*, they speak and sing in a “large” or “natural” voice. Their makeup is very similar to that of the *laosheng*, but with somewhat darker and more pronounced eyes and eyebrows. *Wusheng* may wear *jianyi* (an archer’s robe), *kuaiyi* (fast clothes), or *kao*.<sup>39</sup> *Kao* are special costumes that indicates armor; each can be worn with four flags on the back and is paired with a war helmet adorned with two very

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<sup>38</sup> Bonds 3

<sup>39</sup> Bonds 4, 56.

long pheasant feathers (*lingzi*), one attached to each side. The actors who perform this role type, in addition to the other skills required for a *xiaosheng*, also specialize in martial skills.

### Dan

The *dan*, or female character, is the second most important role type in *jingju*. There are five major subcategories of *dan* roles: the *laodan* (old woman), and four kinds of young female roles--*qingyi* ("blue cloth" *dan*), *huadan* (flower *dan*), *wudan* (martial *dan*), and *huashan* (flower shirt *dan*). Each subcategory of *dan* is distinguishable by physical movement, as well as costume.

The *laodan* is the only *dan* role category portrayed as being physically old. *Laodan* characters are usually dignified and range in social status from dowager empresses to peasant grandmothers. All *laodan* speak and sing in the "large" or "natural" voice and are the only *dan* subcategory to do so. Because they are so elderly, they are usually somewhat physically bent over; their movement is limited, and they often use a tall staff or the arm of a younger character for support. The main skills *laodan* actors specialize in are Song and Speech.

The *laodan* uses very light makeup, and their grey hair consists of a simple bun on the top of their heads, with a headband tied around the head, perhaps ornamented by a central jewel. *Laodan* wear knee-length robes in darker, blended colors which often have water sleeves, and an inner skirt (*chenqun*) underneath that robe. This is all completed with a type of shoe called *fuzi lu* (good fortune) that has a slight lift.<sup>40</sup>

The characters in all four young *dan* role categories range in age from very young women to those in their 50s and sometimes 60s. They all speak and sing in the "small" or "falsetto"

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<sup>40</sup> Bonds 6.

voice, and wear makeup that is similar to the *xiaosheng*'s, but with a deeper rose hue around the eyes. Their costumes are easily distinguished from those of the *xiaosheng* and *laodan*.

The *qingyi* role type encompasses "demure young women and middle-aged women of high status and/or high intrinsic dignity."<sup>41</sup> Wichmann notes that the name of this particular role types may come from "the fact that a blue cloth is used to wrap the head of blue cloth *dan* who are poverty-stricken or traveling."<sup>42</sup> Physically, *qingyi* are demure with downcast eyes and delicate manners. They often wear *nüpi* (women's formal robes), knee length robes in pastel colors that are often embroidered with flowers and other designs and have water sleeves attached at the cuff of the robes; they may also wear *mang* or *xuezi*. Underneath their robes, the *qingyi* wears a long "one hundred pleats skirt" (*baizhe qun*) and flat shoes (*caixie*). The hair and headdress of the *qingyi* are often very complicated, requiring a lengthy process to attach a large number of individual small hairpieces to the actor's head. Once the hair is attached, flowers and jewels are inserted to create an ornate hairstyle.<sup>43</sup> The main skill of the *qingyi* is song that is supported by speech and dance-acting.

The *huadan* are young and vivacious female characters; the role category is often used to depict lower status women, and upper-class servants. These characters usually dress in long skirts or trousers, but do not use water sleeves because of the large amount of hand gesturing these characters perform. *Huadan*, as opposed to their higher status counterparts, tend to be forward, direct, and flirtatious. Their main skill is dance-acting, supported by Speech and sometimes Song.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Wichmann, "Listening" 9

<sup>42</sup> Wichmann, "Listening" 9

<sup>43</sup> Bonds 35

<sup>44</sup> Wichmann, "Listening" 9



The *wudan* character is the martial woman. The *wudan*, like the *wusheng*, may wear *kao*, or a costume that allows them to move quickly and easily. This latter usually consists of a *zhan'ao zhanqun* (short martial jacket, skirt, and trousers), matched with short, flat, ankle boots called *xiao manxue*, or barbarian boots. Alexandra Bonds, in her book *Beijing Opera Costumes*, notes that *wudan*, “generally independent combatants, trained in acrobatics and hand-to-hand combat, often fighting as many as four men at once with sticks and swords.”<sup>45</sup>

As a testament to how flexible *jingju* convention can be, the fifth subcategory of *dan*, called the *huashan*, or flower shirt *dan*, was created by Mei Lanfang (1894-1961) and other leading *dan* performers of the 1920s and 30s. The *huashan* role category combines the three younger *dan* role types discussed above, which allows the actor to perform the widest possible range of skills, and thereby create a more complex character performance. Mei in particular brought this role category to prominence by creating several characters specifically for the *huashan*, including the general Mu Guiying. The *huashan* character wears whatever costumes are deemed appropriate for the nature of the role, which includes both the traditional costumes briefly discussed above, as well as new costumes that Mei created for his new characters.<sup>46</sup>

### Hualian

The *hualian* (lit. “flower face”), or painted face character, is also referred to academically as the *jing* role category. These characters are readily recognizable because of the elaborate and vibrant makeup patterns (*lianpu*) that give specific information about the character’s personality and traits. *Hualian* characters range from upright judges and loyal officials to evil administrators,

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<sup>45</sup> Bonds 11.

<sup>46</sup> Bonds 13.

brave generals, fierce bandits, and supernatural beings. They all use an especially resonant version of the “large” or “natural” voice.

*Hualian* characters are larger than life, emphasized not only by their makeup patterns, but also by their costumes, which are enlarged by a broad, padded under-vest called a *pang’ao*. They wear a thick beard in one continual piece from ear to ear, which may black, grey, or white depending on age, and high-soled boots that are even higher than those of the *laosheng*. Bonds also writes that the performers who are chosen to become *hualian* are generally of a stocky build with a wide face; however, with the large amount of padding, it is possible for a man of a smaller build to train as a *hualian*.<sup>47</sup>

As for the other role categories, there are also subdivisions in the *hualian* role: *dahualian* (great painted face), *fujing* (supporting *hualian*), and *wujing* (martial *hualian*). The *dahualian* role category also goes by the name of *damian* (great face), *beitou* (black head, so named because of the character of Judge Bao),<sup>48</sup> and *tongchui* (copper hammer because of the scepter held by a particular *hualian* character).<sup>49</sup> These characters are usually major characters including statesmen and generals; *dahualian* actors are especially well trained in the song skill. The *fujing* are also known as *jiazi hualian* (posture-painted face) and *erhualian* (second-painted face). They are usually secondary roles, specializing in speech and dance-acting skills. The *wujing*, like their *sheng* and *dan* counterparts, specialize in acting and combat skills, sometimes acrobatics. They also wear the *kao* with the four flags on the back.

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<sup>47</sup> Bonds 15.

<sup>48</sup> Bonds 15.

<sup>49</sup> Bonds 15.

## Chou

The *chou* (lit. “ugly”), most often referred to in English as the jester or the clown,<sup>50</sup> is the comic character of the four role types, playing nagging women, foolish magistrates, and servants. This role category is the only role category where the actor, usually male, can play both genders. The *chou* performer also plays an interesting role in the realm of *jingju* company superstitions because the first performer of *xiqu* was believed to be a *chou* actor.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, to ensure a good performance, the *chou* must always be the first one to put make up on his face, whether it be the full design, or just a spot on the nose.

These characters do not have an implied social status, however *chou* actors may also play young lovers and other characters who are not intrinsically funny. A *chou*’s major function, like many other comic characters in Western and Asian theatre forms, is to serve as the direct link between the world of the play and the audience. They often comment upon the actions, improvise dialogue, and talk directly to the audience.<sup>52</sup> It is also understood that a *chou* actor will bring in modern references, including references from the community in which they are performing; while this might seem jarring at first, it is completely within the realm of the *jingju* world. There are very few plays in which *chou* characters are the leading characters, the role category mostly providing important secondary characters.

There are three subcategories of *chou* characters: *wenchou* (civil *chou*) and *wuchou* (martial *chou*), and *choudan*. The *wenchou* and *wuchou* are male characters of less intrinsic dignity than *sheng* characters. They can be of any social status. Their makeup traditionally features a small patch of white that covers the nose and eyes, accented by black eyebrows, and

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<sup>50</sup> Wichmann “Listening” 11

<sup>51</sup> Fei 19

<sup>52</sup> Wichmann. “Listening” 11.

sometimes by soft red cheeks and softly filled in and outlined lips. Depending on the age of the character, he may be beardless, or wear a black, grey, or white beard. A *chou* beard is generally shorter and patchier than that of the *laosheng*, and almost never in a single continuous piece like that of the *hualian*. The *wenchou* will wear the same type of robes as the *sheng*, but because they are flawed characters, their robes may be shorter than normal, with somewhat outlandish colors, and/or less decorous embroidery.<sup>53</sup> *Wenchou* can also play servants, boatmen, and a variety of characters in service. These actors specialize in Speech, Song, and Dance-Acting; the characters are dressed in simple but still beautiful costumes made out of silk or cotton.<sup>54</sup> *Wuchou* are comic martial characters, who specialize in Combat. They are resourceful and clever with counterattacks. Like other martial characters, the *wuchou* are dressed in *kuaiyi* (quick clothes) or *hua kuaiyi* (flowered quick clothes) and thin-soled ankle boots.

The last subcategory of the *chou* role category is the *choudan*, the female clown character, used to portray characters such as comic stepsisters or mothers, and some matchmakers and innkeepers. These roles require specialization in Speech and Dance-Acting skills. Instead of the white patch of the male *chou* characters, the *choudan* makeup is generally a parody of the delicate makeup of the young *dan*. Younger *choudan* wear costumes similar to those of *qingyi*, but perhaps in surprising colors, or with unusual embroidery. Older *choudan* characters may wear *caipo ao* (colorful jackets worn by older women), which may be too big and boxy for them, or may have pants that are too short.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Bonds 16-17.

<sup>54</sup> Bonds 17.

<sup>55</sup> Bonds 17

## Music

There are two types of music that will be discussed in this dissertation, vocal and atmospheric. Both of these music types create the mood and, in the case of the former, project specific emotions from the actor to the audience through the Song Skill. In *jingju*, the vocal music adheres to the *pihuang* (皮黃) system of vocal music, named for its two primary modes, *xipi* (西皮) and *erhuang* (二黃). As Wichmann describes it, the vocal music conveys the “psychology of the major characters.”<sup>56</sup> This of course supports the play and the characters, and thereby helps draw the audience into the production and increase their identification with the characters.

A major element of *pihuang* is metrical types, of which there are six metered types: primary meter, slow meter, fast meter, fast three eyes meter, two-six meter, and flowing water meter; and four unmetered types: dispersed meter, lead-in meter, undulating dragon meter, and shaking-meter.<sup>57</sup> Each meter carries its own expression of emotion, which is often correlated with the speed of the meter. For instance, primary meter is a stable meter. It is often sung when emotions are stable and everything is relatively matter-of-fact, while fast meter is often used when there is great excitement or anticipation or, as Wichmann quotes Lu Genzhang as saying, when “a character needs to say a lot really fast.”<sup>58</sup> Fast meter is basically syllabic, while slower meters, like primary meter and slow meter, are more melismatic, involving more individual pitches for each syllable. Slow meter, as mentioned above, is the other extreme and is used in introspective situations, or as Lu told Wichmann, when a character has “five minutes to move on to the next word”<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> Wichmann “*Listening*” 53.

<sup>57</sup>Wichmann “*Listening*” 53.

<sup>58</sup> Lu; Zhang

<sup>59</sup>Lu; Zhang

Another major element of *pihuang* is modes and modal systems. There are two modal systems: *xipi* and *erhuang*; both systems are vital to determining the overall atmosphere of the play and the inner psychology of major characters involved. *Xipi*, the principle mode of the *xipi* modal system, is often described as “bright, clear, energetic, forceful, and purposeful, and best used in situations that are joyful, delightful and vehement.”<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, *erhuang*, the principal mode of the *erhuang* modal system, is described as relatively dark, deep and profound, and heavy and meticulous, and best used in situations that are filled with grief, remembrance, and lyricism.

Music and song in *jingju* are constant elements. The orchestra, made up of both string and percussion instruments, plays non-stop throughout a play, using silence, if it is ever used, as a moment of emphasis. This dissertation not only looks at the arias and vocal music used in each case study, but also examines the use of atmospheric music, a tool utilized by creative teams to create an emotional draw for audiences. There are, of course, different uses of the orchestra itself and for the music they play that are specific to each case study, and each of these instances will be examined in the dissertation.

## **Methodology**

### Theoretical Methodology

As mentioned above, Marvin Carlson’s Seven Intercultural Relationships provides the framework I need in order to properly assess each performance. Examining each performance by its use of plot construction; the Four Skills: Song, Speech, Dance-Acting, and Combat; the Role Categories; music; costumes and makeup; sets; and lighting, I am able to look at the process of creation for each case study, exploring how each element fared in the face of challenges and the

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<sup>60</sup> Thorpe “Music” 136.

dynamics of the creative teams. As we will see in the explorations of the creative processes, *jingju* conventions had to bend in order to tell the best version of each story and the results of each negotiation that took place within the creative teams were also influential in how I assess each performance in regards to the Seven Relationships.

At the same time, I used the Seven Relationships to measure the success of all of the performances to determine if these five performances could be used as examples of a revival of China's national theatre form. The idea of *jingju*, sometimes referred to as *guoju* (国剧 or "national theatre") as China's national theatre form is not a new one, as we saw in our previous discussion of Mei Lanfang's 1930s tours. However, in light of recent Chinese political and social policies regarding minorities and in places like Hong Kong, the Ministry of Culture has reignited the idea of *jingju* as the ultimate *xiqu* form. Exploring all five of these case studies as a group within Carlson's Seven Relationships and determining their success and encouraging the discussions that will occur throughout this dissertation.

### Fieldwork Methodology

#### Archival Research and Attending Performances

Because of the timing of my field research, I was not able to witness the rehearsal process of any *jingju* adaptation of Western literature. I therefore made a selection of the most representative recent productions and collected DVD recordings of them. I collected these DVDs through interviews and by traveling to the Shanghai *Jingju* Company Archives. DVDs were exceptionally useful for my research because they enabled me to watch and re-watch each individual performance so that I could provide consistent analysis throughout my work both in China and in the United States.

I of course also took advantage of every opportunity to see one of my case study productions in live performance. At these performances, I took notes on the performance itself and on my own reactions to specific moments. Unfortunately, I was only able to see one or two of the case-study productions live because the others had been performed several years previous to my fieldwork. Nonetheless, I believe that through observation, interview, and literary research, these productions provide clear insights into how such adaptations were created across both domestic and international borders.

### Interviews

The main resources for this research, besides the DVD recordings of the productions, were the creative teams themselves. As explained above, in the context of a working Jingju company in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, a creative team consists of the director(s), playwright(s), composer(s), costume and set designer(s), and lead actors for a particular production. I was able to reach out to additional directors, actors, and scholars through connections made through friends and earlier interviews. I conducted interviews in three ways, depending upon the availability of the individuals: In-Person, over Skype, and over WeChat, a popular messaging application.

In-person interviews were vital to the research process. Not only was I able to meet the actor or the director or the scholar in person, but it was clear that what I was researching was part of an often-held discussion; through the in-person interviews, artists and scholars were really able to voice their opinions. Because my Chinese is limited, I employed the help of two translators, Grant Zhong in Shanghai and Zhang Yu in Beijing, who were both extremely knowledgeable about *jingju* and also became vast sources of information in their own rights.



Grant Zhong is, in the words of Professor William Huizhu Sun, a *jingju* “super fan.”<sup>61</sup> While he does not work in *jingju*, the amount of knowledge and connections he had amassed over the past decade or so was staggering. Through him, I was able to get in contact with several artists in both Shanghai and Beijing. Zhang Yu was an art student who had worked as a translator on *Fushide* in 2015 for director, Anna Peschke and the Italian creative team. I met her through a mutual friend and through her, I met two actors from *Fushide* and was put in contact with director, Anna Peschke, in Germany.

Skype and WeChat also became useful tools, specifically when interviewing directors who did not live in China or who could not meet in person. Skype became especially useful when interviewing Anna Peschke, who does not live in China. Through these interviews, despite internet connectivity problems, we were able to sit “face-to-face” and examine both *Woyicaike* and *Fushide*, along with any insights she and I might have had about each other’s work. WeChat’s audio recording function was a surprise tool, especially useful when the artist and I could not meet in person. We could each respond to the other and take our time in answering and asking questions, making for a more relaxed interview.

This dissertation focuses on the performance of and, if possible, on the creation process of *jingju* adaptations of Western literature, as well as the extent to which the process affects the final performance. Each case study has its own set of unique obstacles and problems to overcome and each analysis will shed light on the methods utilized to overcome those obstacles, while also highlighting the mixture of *jingju* and Western theatre conventions.

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<sup>61</sup> Sun, “Interview” 2015

### **Limits of Research**

The first limitation of this dissertation is its 21<sup>st</sup> century focus. It is within this century that *jingju* companies have increasingly moved away from Shakespeare and begun to look into other Western playwrights and authors. As readers and scholars, we understand that China has become a major player in world events, and it makes sense that the major national form of theatre is also broadening its connection with global affairs.

The second limitation I placed onto this dissertation is that of location. I focused on the work of the National China *Jingju* Company in Beijing and the Shanghai *Jingju* Theatre in Shanghai. These two cities are the two main centers with the largest and active *jingju* companies in terms of new play creation and productions. The one exception to this limitation is my analysis of one of the first *jingju* adaptations of non-Shakespearean Western Literature, *Zhuli Xiaojie* (*Miss Julie*), which was produced at the Shanghai Theatre Academy, one of China's two major schools for *jingju* performers, directors, designers, and playwrights.

### **Approach to this Study**

The limitations I placed on this dissertation forced me to choose a smaller sample of productions because I could only choose plays from those three locations. Because of this smaller sample size, I believe I was able to perform an in-depth analysis of each production, which then allowed me to easily assign a range of stages based on Carlson's Seven Relationships.

At the same time, it is important to me that preconceived notions of Beijing *jingju* (京派 *jingpai*) -- considered to be more traditional -- and Shanghai *jingju* (海派 *haipai*) -- considered to be more experimental-- did not affect the outcomes of my analysis. To that end, I organized the case studies according to what I believe their rankings would be on the Seven Intercultural

Relationships. In ordering the dissertation this way, I am able to look at each production on their own merits and according to each team's creative process, instead of being influenced by preconceptions of each city's style.

## CHAPTER 2: XIAOLI ZHISI (《小吏之死》) DEATH OF A LITTLE SERVANT/DEATH OF A GOVERNMENT CLERK) (2012)

### Introduction

In 2007, Yan Qinggu, a *chou* actor with the Shanghai *Jingju* Company, decided to tackle one of the ultimate playwrights of Russian Theatre: Anton Chekhov. Instead of adapting one of Chekhov's full-length plays, Yan decided to adapt one of Chekhov's shortest stories: *Death of a Government Clerk*, calling it *Death of a Little Servant* (*Xiaoli zhisi* 小吏之死) and cast a *chou* character in the role of the Little Servant.

Yan Qinggu listed a number of goals that he, as both director and actor, and the Creative team had for this production: 1) to test the creative team's creativity and ability to adapt Chekhov's story—with its special temporal and cultural challenges—to *jingju*; 2) to explore the extent of comedic acting in *jingju*; 3) to use tradition to act as a building block to flesh out the bones of the show; and 4) to see if a *chou* character could carry the entire show. Each one of these goals is meant to explore the basic boundaries and traditions of *jingju* and see how far they can stretch.<sup>62</sup>

In creating this adaptation, Yan and the creative team relied heavily on traditional *jingju* and *chou* performance techniques to express the Government Clerk's state of mind. In this specific case, the emphasis was placed on the Dance-Acting because, while Chekhov does not go very deeply into the Clerk's mental state in the story, the *jingju* performance was intended to, so that all Four Main Skills are represented in the performance, and Yan would have the opportunity to demonstrate all of his skills. Yan specializes in the *wuchou* Role Category, which emphasizes Dance-Acting and Combat; for this play, he intended to also feature Speech and Song, which are mainly reserved for *wen*, or civil, characters. As we dig deeper into Yan's history as a performer

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<sup>62</sup> Yan, "Interview" April 2016

and into the creative process of this performance, we will explore how Yan and the Creative team expanded Chekhov's short story into an hour long *jingju* production.

*Death of a Government Clerk* is a total of one and half pages long and focuses on one figure: Ivan Tchervyakov, who is a lowly government clerk. While at the opera one night, Tchervyakov accidentally sneezes on his superior. Embarrassed, he goes home and tells his wife what has happened. She yells and scolds him for being so careless. The next day, he apologizes to his superior who makes fun of him before sending him home. Arriving home, Tchervyakov dresses in his best uniform, lies down on the couch, and dies. While other characters cycle in and out of the story, Tchervyakov's plight is central. The trajectory of Tchervyakov's psychological well-being is enough to sustain an entire story and any subsequent adaptations

For the purposes of this dissertation, I have relied mainly on a video recording of the production instead of the available script, which was subsequently revised in rehearsal by the creative team to create a more cohesive performance. The quotes used in this chapter are my own translation, for the sole purpose of this dissertation, and should not be taken as an official translation.

#### Haipai – Shanghai-style jingju

In order to discuss *Xiaoli zhisi*, as well as *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou*, adaptations of *Notre Dame de Paris* which are both analyzed in Chapter 4, the concept of *haipai*, Shanghai-style *jingju*, must be explained. A discussion of *haipai* will provide the reader with an understanding of the differences between *jingju* in Beijing and *jingju* in Shanghai, and how performances are created in these different environments.

Because *jingju* originated in Beijing, most new *jingju* plays created in Beijing have tended to carry a strong traditional flavor, perhaps also because of the city's role as China's capital. *Jingju*

and other theatrical arts in Shanghai, on the other hand, have always been more open to innovating and embracing new techniques. This may be due at least in part to Shanghai's position as a major international port city, and to the presence of approximately 60,000 foreigners by the 1930s,<sup>63</sup> who lived in foreign concessions laid out around the city and knew very little about the Chinese or China,<sup>64</sup> and up to 255,000 foreigners by 2015, including those from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau.<sup>65</sup> The varying degrees of intermingling of different influences and ideas has inspired much of what is considered to be *haipai* (海派), or the Shanghai style of *jingju*, typically characterized by big and bold adaptations of *jingju* convention meant to break boundaries, chart new territories, and bring in audiences. *Haipai* is, as Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak writes, "a daringly innovative Shanghai-style *jingju* of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries...develop[ing] as a market-driven performing art in competition and interplay with other forms of *xiqu*...characterized by a willingness to expand forms."<sup>66</sup> In his discussion of the rivalry between *jingpai* (京派 Beijing Style-*jingju*) and *haipai*, Joshua Goldstein points to the derogatory origins of the term *haipai*, with critics claiming that *haipai* actors "only devote attention to the appearance of confusion and gay bustle. They do not pursue true technical ability."<sup>67</sup> Goldstein also notes that theatre owners turned to sets, costumes, and lighting to create amazing special affects to attract audiences with the knowledge that inviting guest actors would be risky. However, by the 1930s, *haipai* actors were becoming celebrities, which gave *haipai* a more positive spin. All of a sudden, critics were stating

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<sup>63</sup> Rattini, 2

<sup>64</sup> Spence 334

<sup>65</sup> Flannery 2

<sup>66</sup> Wichmann-Walczak "Reform" 149; Wichmann, "Tradition" 149

<sup>67</sup> Goldstein 189.

that *jingpai* actors could learn more from *haipai*, especially in terms of theatre technology and even performing with more expression.<sup>68</sup>

Much of ultimate positivity surrounding *haipai* was thanks to the Xia Brothers: Yuehang, Yueshang, Yueran, and Yuehua, who were all part of an acting family and active in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The brothers had two goals: one was to make *jingju* financially viable in Shanghai, and the second was to make *jingju* relatable on both social and political levels. In order to reach these goals, the Xia brothers built a new modern-style theatre called the Shanghai New Stage (上海新舞台 *shanghai xin wutai*) in 1908, moving away from the traditional tea house format. The new theatre was inspired by the Western inspired theatres, which Xia Yuerun saw on a trip to Japan, complete with a proscenium and a rotating stage. They also incorporated elaborate sets and special effects.<sup>69</sup>

In the early 1980s, the SJC revisited their own artistic mission in order to solve the growing problem of too large troupes, dwindling and older audiences, shrinking state support, and competition from television, film, and other contemporary entertainment.<sup>70</sup> In doing so, the SJC identified three target audiences: first were children, who are introduced to *jingju* through adaptations of popular legends and myths, including one production based on a Monkey King adventure, *Pan si dong (Cave of the Coiled Webs)*.<sup>71</sup> Through this production, students learned about the Four Great *Dan* and their specific styles of performance, and about different forms of *xiqu*, including the Sichuan art of changing faces (*bian lian* 变脸). The second target audience was urban intellectuals, whom the Shanghai Company deduced would want to see the best of

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<sup>68</sup> Goldstein 191.

<sup>69</sup> Goldstein 76-78.

<sup>70</sup> Wichmann "Reform" 98.

<sup>71</sup> Wichmann, "Reform" 107.

tradition embodied in new performances, which includes original productions that revolved around “daring political and philosophical themes [that] are staged with imagistic scenery rather than realistic scenery and original, historically based costume, extraordinary classic-based scores, and innovative instrumentation.”<sup>72</sup> The third target audience consisted of what Wichmann-Walczak calls “popular urban audiences,” and the SJC produced spectacular and melodramatic serial performances as well as traditional *zhezixi* performances, scenes that have been extracted from a longer production, and are produced as stand-alone one-act plays.

The SJC also began targeting a fourth audience in the late 1990s, made up of college students. The focus on this particular segment was the company’s way of challenging the premise that younger audiences find *jingju* to be boring, slow, and the favored entertainment for the older generations. In order to appeal to younger audiences, the SJC staged an adaptation of *King Lear* entitled *Qi wang meng (Dream of the King of Qi)*, which incorporated an “allegory of Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution; to the strains of the *xun*, an ancient wind instrument with an eerie sound.”<sup>73</sup> It is toward these audiences that *jingju* adaptations of Western literature, including *Xiaoli zhisi* and the two adaptations of *Notre Dame de Paris*, are aimed.

Along with targeting these audiences, the SJC also revamped the way that they worked with their artistic staff. The company retired actors who could no longer perform on the stage but could still teach classes. They also brought in veteran actors to teach master classes to their younger corps of actors, and they created new stories to perform for each of their target audiences.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Wichmann “Reform” 108.

<sup>73</sup> Wichmann “Reform” 109.

<sup>74</sup> Wichmann “Reform” 101- 108.



### Anton Chekhov and Death of a Government Clerk

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) was a medical doctor, comedic playwright, and author of over a thousand short stories. By the time he died at age 44, he had written over a hundred short stories and five plays, all of which are representative of Chekhov's attitudes towards life,<sup>75</sup> reflecting a certain wry sense of humor in order to deal with a life of instability and temporariness. Chekhov's fear of the unstable and his dry sense of humor could have stemmed from his teenage years when his father, a shop owner in Taganrog, had to declare bankruptcy because of his lack of business skills and had to sneak away to Moscow.<sup>76</sup> Chekhov's mother followed, taking the three younger children with her to Moscow, leaving teenage Anton in Taganrog, where he supported himself by tutoring.<sup>77</sup> He finally left Taganrog for Moscow to attend medical school, and found his family living in a basement apartment without his father, who lived in the office of his new job.<sup>78</sup>

In order to support his family while he was in school, Chekhov continued to submit and write stories to magazines and newspapers, gaining a following and reputation as a humorous and satirical writer. By the time he graduated from medical school, Chekhov was well-established as a writer, eventually deciding to become a country doctor and only see patients as a form of charity.

Chekhov's work as a writer embraces themes that derive not only from his life, but also from his ability to observe. Generally, there three themes, in particular, rise to the forefront in his works and bear mentioning in reference to *Xiaoli zhisi*. Much of Chekhov's work is focused on social commentary, especially looking at the differences between what Yan Qinggu called "the

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<sup>75</sup> Wolff xi

<sup>76</sup> Senelick, "The Complete Plays" xvi

<sup>77</sup> Heim 33

<sup>78</sup> Senelick, "The Complete Plays" xvii

little people,”<sup>79</sup> meaning the people of the lower classes, whom Chekhov would talk to every day as a landowner and a country doctor, and the upper classes, whom Wolff describe as always in stasis with the “inability to move from the idea to the act.”<sup>80</sup> On one hand, Chekhov saw a group of people who wanted to move ahead, but could not because of economic and social restrictions. On the other hand, he mostly associated with a class of people who had the economic and social abilities to move forward, but could not for sentimental reasons—whether it be for the estate that they live on but cannot retain, or for the lives they live and want to continue despite the economic and social changes occurring in Russia at the time. It is important to note that while other literary figures, such as Tolstoy and Gorky, were quite vocal about their political opinions, Chekhov instead wrote in “subdued and civilized tones,”<sup>81</sup> choosing to portray his characters with humor and satire, which served as his tools to poke fun at the bored aristocracy in his plays, while also highlighting the lives of the lower classes. His short stories, generally speaking, provided an outlet for Chekhov, however gentle, to criticize the socio-political situations in Russia at time for a wider range of people from the plight of the lower classes and social inequality. Despite these small differences, Chekhov wrote from what he knew and what he saw from life, which makes these plays and stories relatable for his audiences and readers.

Another theme that arises in Chekhov’s work is that of the environment, including both nature itself and the atmosphere between his characters. In *Uncle Vanya*, Yelena complains of her suffering from being in the country and in her marriage to her professor husband, while also aware of the tension she has brought into the estate. Meanwhile, the Doctor speaks of the trees that he observes while on his rounds and how they are being pulled down for industrial purposes.

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<sup>79</sup> Yan “Interview” 2016

<sup>80</sup> Wolff xiv

<sup>81</sup> Karlinsky 10

Dramatically, the environment, both nature and the rooms in which people live, affect how characters react to each other and how they respond to certain triggers. In *Death of a Government Clerk*, Tchervyakov's embarrassment over his sneeze at the opera and the pressures he feels at home from his Wife, are all environmental triggers that carry Tchervyakov's psychological trajectory throughout the story. While his sudden death at the end is humorous, it is not impossible to believe that, for a man in his position, that amount of pressure would take its toll.

The psychological turmoil that Chekhov writes about in his story and his focus on the lower classes, although presented humorously, are the main elements, I believe, that drew Yan Qinggu to this particular story. The Chinese Government, in its various forms, has always put pressure on their various ministries to become the best. In keeping with the Confucian Code of Ethics on a national scale, which places the Emperor/Government at the head, in the family unit that pressure trickles down to the children, who carry the pressures not only of their families, but also of their countries. In examining the creative team's artistic journeys before and during the creative process for *Xiaoli zhisi*, we will discover that the creative team took the Ministry of Culture's mandates that *jingju* must appeal to modern audiences seriously, and created a production that, while set in a different time period, would still resonate in the present.

Chinese productions of Chekhov have been *huaju*, or spoken drama, productions. In the past twenty years, there have been a handful of *huaju* performances of his plays in Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, including a 2004 production of *Three Sisters*, directed by Lin Zhaohua, a major *huaju* director (Figure 4). In 2015, the National Theatre of China staged *Love, Chekhov* (Figure 5), a biographical play that celebrated the 155<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. It is difficult to find reviews of how these performances were received, however, considering that

there have been several productions of his plays, it would seem that Chekhov and his connection to Stanislavsky -- who inspired the growth of the *huaqu* form -- has finally come into his own in China.



Figure 4: *Three Sisters*  
directed by Lin Zhaohua,  
2004



Figure 5 *Love, Chekhov*  
at the National China  
Theatre, January 2015

### The Creative Team

Yan Qinggu, the solo actor as well as the director of *Xiaoli zhisi*, is one of Shanghai *Jingju* Company's more prolific *wuchou*, or martial clown, actors. Yan began his training as a child because of his mother's interest in the traditional arts. In 1996, after Yan had completed the rigorous training course at SJC, he and a small group of students, including *huashan* actor Shi Yihong, were selected to participate in an intensive four -year *jingju* research course at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts (NACTA). This experimental program provided select rising *jingju* stars with seminars on literary criticism, language training in English or Japanese, and Master classes in performance. The students came together for two months out of the year, and then returned to their home companies for the remaining ten months to perform, presumably also

taking back whatever they had learned.<sup>82</sup> Yan has previously stated that this program was a turning point in his career, because he not only become a student of famed *wuchou* actor Zhang Chunhua, but also discovered the art of *kyōgen*, the Japanese comedic theatre often associated with *nō*.

After completing the program, Yan travelled to Japan to study *kyōgen* with the Shigeyama family, which has been performing for fourteen generations and has recently taken an interest in creating intercultural *kyōgen*, ranging from “bilingual *kyōgen*” to *kyōgen* adaptations of Western sources.<sup>83</sup> It was during this year that Yan worked on learning *kyōgen* performance techniques, which allowed him to perform at the Kyoto shrine in *Bonsan*, a play about a thief who is tempted to steal a miniature landscape from a mansion. Throughout his training with the Shigeyama Family, Yan worked on strengthening his vocal projection, a long-term challenge that had prevented him from performing *wenchou*, or civil *chou*, roles. After that year, his Speech and Song Skills had improved so much that he was able to branch out into *wenchou* and roles that required a large amount of Speech and Song, such as Xiang Qiang in *Zhuli Xiaojie*, Sun Wukong the Monkey King, and now Yue Dianshi the Little Servant.

Playwright Gong Xiaoxiong, who was newly graduated from NACTA and had experience writing for other *xiqu* forms and *huaju*,<sup>84</sup> and composer Jin Guoxian, an experienced *jinghu* player who was admitted to the Shanghai Theatre School at the age of 5 to study *jingju* music,<sup>85</sup> completed the creative team. All three of these artists embraced the emotional and mental trajectory that Yue Dianshi takes through this production. This ranged from Yue’s flowery language to the urgency conveyed in the use of the *xipi* mode as Yue becomes more and

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<sup>82</sup> R. Li “Soul” 201

<sup>83</sup> Doji “Interview” 2016

<sup>84</sup> Gong Baïke Entry

<sup>85</sup> Jin Baïke Entry

more frantic. At the same time, Jin also incorporated Suzhou-based musical traditions, in keeping with Yan's desire to feature Suzhou, discussed below.

Without a doubt, Yan's training with masters in both China and Japan, along with Gong's script and Jin's music, helped the creative team guide audiences in forming an opinion as to what *jingju* e should be for a 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century audience: a theatre form that uses convention to tell new versions of both traditional and Western stories, thus embracing the nature of modern China. At the same time, the creative team also sought to emphasize the versatility of the *chou*, often considered to be the Role Category least able to serve as the focus of a play. In doing so, the creative team established another connection to Chekhov's original story, which focuses on the "little character," a connection that Yan found pleasing.<sup>86</sup>

### **Pre-Production**

#### **Script Creation**

In our interview, Yan described two possible methods with which to adapt Chekhov's original story. The first method is to adapt the play keeping the Western story written for a Western audience and using Western techniques. Yan cited a production of *Othello*, entitled *Aosailuo*, produced in 1983, 1986, and 1987 by the Beijing Experimental *Jingju* Company, starring *hualian* actor Ma Yongan as Othello.<sup>87</sup> This production was inspired by a Soviet Union movie version of *Othello* that Ma had seen as a child. Li Ruru described *Aosailuo* as "vigorously and noisily alive,"<sup>88</sup> embracing Western instruments, Russian dance, makeup, and costumes, in an effort to keep the production in "its original sauce,"<sup>89</sup> meaning that creative teams embraced

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<sup>86</sup> Yan, "Interview" 2016

<sup>87</sup> R. Li, "Shashibiya" 176

<sup>88</sup> R. Li, "Shashibiya" 178.

<sup>89</sup> R. Li, "Shashibiya" 178

these adaptations as Western stories, for Western audiences, and used Western methods to produce these adaptations for Chinese audiences. This, Yan felt, was a lost opportunity, which led him and the creative team to the second method of adaptation, where they approached the original story as if it were a Chinese story for Chinese audiences. This allowed them to pick and choose among *jingju* conventions to prove “that with a deep understanding of *jingju* and its application in all forms, it is possible to transform Western plays as long as you remain true to the content of the story and its context.”<sup>90</sup>

At its core, *Death of a Government Clerk* is about the “little person,”<sup>91</sup> which is why Yan wanted to adapt this particular story. The anxiety that is created when such a person, who has fixated on one little incident, is an universal feeling that would resonate with any audience, but in adapting and expanding Chekhov's original story to *jingju* and China, the creative team—especially Gong -- fleshed out Chekhov's original story and emphasized its tragi-comedic nature.

The *jingju* version is set in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), harkening back to a time when the Imperial Exams played a major role in a man's life, and centered around Yue Dianshi, a low-level government clerk who occupies a position invented for him in return for a favor he did for the Imperial Inspector. Yue is a failed scholar who has been studying for the Imperial Exams for ten years. He has been unable to reach those higher levels and has only made it to peon level, so very little honor has been brought to his family. However, he continues to study at night for those higher-level exams.

The fatal sneeze occurs at a banquet given in honor of the Imperial Inspector. Instead of following a linear path as Chekhov did, the creative team chose to dive deeper into Yue's psyche

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<sup>90</sup> Yan Qinggu “Interview” 2016.

<sup>91</sup> Yan Qinggu “Interview” 2016.

and background through a series of narrations and flashbacks, during which Yue describes how he got his job and shares his hopeful dreams of promotion. Through his narration, Yue encounters his Wife, who kicks him out of their house until he apologizes for his *faux pas*. Anxiously, Yue writes a letter in very flowery language. While bringing the letter to the Imperial Inspector's, he frets over the language he has used, because what he has written could be taken as an accusation of corruption against the Imperial Inspector, which could lead to his death and dishonor for his family. On his journey to apologize, Yue finds the Inspector distributing food to the poor in a small town. He shouts that he has come to apologize for the sneeze, but the only reply he hears is the Imperial Inspector's demand that anyone who has committed crimes should be executed. Fearful that the Imperial Inspector is referring to him, Yue runs away from the Inspector and the guards, and dies from exhaustion coupled with the stress of having embarrassed himself and his family.

The creative team also took advantage of the process of translation and changed the title from *Death of a Government Clerk* Chekhov's original title, to *Death of a Little Servant*. With this title change, the creative team brings the character down to an even lower level, implying that there is no hope for him to move to a higher position in life or occupation. This raises the stakes for Yue and reflects badly on both himself and his family.

### **Conventions Used and Adapted**

To simplify, Yan's goals for *Xiaoli zhisi* were to see how far *jingju* convention could be stretched to retell Chekhov's story, and to highlight the skills and inherent abilities of the *chou* role category. In pursuing these goals, the creative team incorporated a variety of skills and techniques that were specific to the *chou*, such as playing multiple roles utilizing different dialects, and incorporating conventions from other role categories. Experimenting with different



*jingju* conventions and stories allowed the creative team to present a new production that is consistent with *haipai* and shows audiences what *jingju* and *chou* characters can do.

### Solo Performance

The *chou* role category is a naturally flexible category with deep connections to religion and *jingju* history.<sup>92</sup> *Chou* characters, as clowns, are able to imitate and perform all of the other role categories and both genders in order to provide humor. They are also able to break the Fourth Wall and talk directly to the audience using the local idioms.

However, despite their connections to Chinese and *jingju* history and their unique characteristics, *chou* characters are very rarely placed in leading roles. When they do play main roles, it is most often in one-act plays, where they are able to jump in and out to play multiple roles. This style falls under a type of performance called *bashi zhi* (八十制), a tradition that stems from a brother and sister team playing multiple roles.<sup>93</sup> This type of *xiqu* is also useful for a *chou* actor to test his acting abilities and his strengths as a performer and is the perfect vehicle with which to explore the pressures an ordinary person puts on themselves over a small issue in a humorous way. This is one of the hallmarks of the *chou* role category: the ability to insert humor into a sad situation allows audiences to examine Chekhov's humor and how he viewed the world through another theatre tradition.

The presence of multiple characters in such a short play created a challenge in the rehearsal process. Originally, the creative team wanted several actors; however, they quickly found that having people coming in and out of the play required introductions for each character, which felt too cumbersome in such a short piece. However, because the *chou* is a naturally flexible role

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<sup>92</sup> Thorpe, Ashley "Only Joking" 270.

<sup>93</sup> Yan Qinggu "Interview" 2016.

category, the creative team decided to create a solo performance, playing to the *chou*'s ability to "jump in and out of the play and change character as the play goes on"<sup>94</sup> without changing costumes and relying solely on Yan's acting Skill. The solo performance format also created an interesting challenge for Yan Qinggu to seamlessly perform all of the necessary role categories.

### Role Categories

#### Yue Dianshi (曰典史 *The Little Servant*)

Yue Dianshi (Figure 6), as a low-level clerk, is the typical role for a *wenchou* character, one that is not usually in the limelight. The creative team built up Yue Dianshi's anxiety through flashbacks, recounting Yue's personal history in his introduction to the audience in order to establish Yue's psychological and emotional trajectories.

YUE DIANSHI.	I, am Yue Dianshi. My ten years have wasted a lifetime in strenuous study. Year after year's metropolitan exam, falling behind Sun Shan. After experiencing another failure, the Province Government Inspector, Excellency Yue, recommended me for a job. Dianshi's ability in Linwu County is very minor. The first thought of His Excellency Imperial Inspector of Zuo Kaoshan, was that I can rapidly rise. Nine ranks becomes eight ranks, eight ranks promotes to seven ranks, bring retiring from the administrative department. I didn't expect, I didn't expect...A you! This damned sneeze! Making a spectacle of me, still defiling His Excellency, the Imperial Inspector. <sup>95</sup>
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This introduction tells the audience a lot about Yue Dianshi's personality. He is a failed but ambitious government worker who hopes to rise quickly in the ranks but has defiled his superior by sneezing on him. This is how the play begins.

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<sup>94</sup> Yan Qinggu "Interview" 2016.

<sup>95</sup> Gong 1-2.

As the play continues, the audience is introduced to several other characters who only add to Yue's anxiety. Through the introduction of these other characters, especially Yue's wife, the audience begins to understand why Yue quickly becomes anxious over what he has done and what he believes he is being accused of. The fear of dishonoring the family and losing face was, and continues to be, a strong force in Chinese culture. Through the presentation of Yue and his story, Yan Qinggu is presenting a satire of the strong emphasis that is placed on not losing face, a concern that still resonates in today's China.



Fig 6: Yan Qinggu as Yue Dianshi

### His Wife

One of the most significant characters in this piece, besides Yue, is his Wife, who is characterized as being from Suzhou, a city in Southwestern China. In our interview, Yan described his strong personal and professional connection to Suzhou.

The Suzhou dialect is very attractive, especially when you are yelling at people, like when she calls him a dead man. As soon as you say it in Suzhou dialect, it draws the audience in. I have liked the Suzhou dialect since I was little; my home is in Suzhou, so I understand Suzhou better. In speaking Suzhou dialect, it shows a woman who is very fierce and terrible while the man is very weak. Likewise, at work, his boss treats him badly and he has to watch his boss's expression to know what to expect. The Suzhou dialect appears in *jingju* pretty often.<sup>96</sup>

Yan's description of Suzhou women is depicted in the characterization of the Wife. She is overbearing and loud, which makes for a good contrast with Yue's generally genial personality. When Yue tells her what has happened, she yells at him, emphasizing her strength and his weakness. She then sings in Suzhou *pingtan*, a traditional type of singing used for storytelling and ballads, another way of tying the story to China.

"My fate is bitter, most bitter of my accord  
Your life should not be absurd, should not grow dizzy with success, should not  
make the boss even angrier  
I condemn you, hit you, tell you, punish you, knock you, pinch you, bite you, kick  
you, as a warning to you.  
Eating and clothes depend on you retaining the gauze cap.  
If you lose your job, the next day I will leave you."<sup>97</sup>

Onstage, Yan Qinggu also plays the wife, *choudan* or comic female impersonation being another skill of the *chou* actor, as already discussed. Yan imitates a *dan*, in a way that contradicts the image of a fierce and fiery woman. In his caricature of her, Yan mimes her playing the *pipa*, a guitar-like instrument; speaks in a falsetto; and uses movements that are reminiscent of a *dan*

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<sup>96</sup> Yan Qinggu "Interview" 2016.

<sup>97</sup> Yan Qinggu "Interview" 2016.

character, such performing orchid hands (兰花 *lanhua*) and indicating the presence of water sleeves through hand movement.

*The Imperial Inspector, County Magistrate, and Gatekeeper*

The orchestra conductor plays The Imperial Inspector's Gatekeeper. This involves using a technique from *liyuanxi* (梨园戏), a traditional theatre form from Fujian, in Southeast China, in which actors, while in character, and the orchestra members as characters communicate directly with each other.<sup>98</sup> This type of theatre form utilizes the orchestra in different ways during performance. Sometimes the orchestra accompanies songs, and other times the orchestra will respond in *da qiang* (搭腔), a form of call and response, here between the Government Clerk and other characters played by the orchestra. Because of the overwhelming voice that comes out of the orchestra, Yue's meek nature is, again, highlighted and emphasized to the audience.<sup>99</sup> What is especially interesting about this relationship is that, technically, the Gatekeeper is lower in status than Yue. He is actually a servant, while Yue is a government official who never "made it past the mailroom."<sup>100</sup> But Yue is so stressed and so overwhelmed that even the Gatekeeper is able to completely overtake him.

The Imperial Inspector and the Country Magistrate are presented through flashback, also played by Yan Qinggu. Adapting the body language of a *laosheng* and *xiaosheng* respectively, Yan Qinggu sings a couplet in the traditional patterns of each role category. The performance of both of these role categories in such quick succession is a demonstration of the skill of a successful *chou* actor.

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<sup>98</sup> Mackerras 38.

<sup>99</sup> Yan "Interview" 2016.

<sup>100</sup> Yan "Interview" 2016.

### Dance-Acting

Yue is alone on stage for the entire performance, so it is incredibly important that Yan Qinggu be able to skillfully carry out the performance of not only his own character, but also of the other characters in the story. In the case of *Death of a Little Servant*, there are four characters that Yan Qinggu performs: Yue, his Wife, the Imperial Inspector, and the County Magistrate, as discussed above. In this section, I will highlight specific parts of Yan's performance as Yue and the Wife to convey a sense of Yan's ability to dance-act (*zuo*); which in this case also shows how versatile a *chou* can be. As a *wuchou* by training, Yan Qinggu is already proficient in many aspects of dance-acting skill. Much of this performance is reliant on his abilities to convey emotion while also demonstrating his skill.

### Anxiety and Death

Much of the play revolves around the Yue's growing anxiety that he has not only shamed his superior, but because Yue's flowerly language might have accused his superior of corruption. The pinnacle of the demonstration of Yue's anxiety is manifested as a major movement sequence, including several different versions of the *chou*'s signature *aizi bu*, a type of comedic walk in which the actor crouches and scoots around the stage on the balls of his feet; this sequence ends in his death. Each portion of this segment increases in speed and complexity, representing Yue's state of mind as he comically runs away from the Imperial Officers.

IMPERIAL OFFICERS.  
YUE DIANSHI.

IMPERIAL OFFICERS.  
YUE DIANSHI.

You break the law, suffer the punishment.  
Break the law? To go far? Ai yo, His Excellency, I  
am wrong--  
Come, tie him up!  
You are not able to tie me up. I didn't break the law!  
I've been treated unfairly! (*joining fear and anxiety*,  
*YUE DIANSHI has a burst of energy for a period of*

*time, then has difficulty breathing, covers his chest, and falls to the ground with a loud crash)*<sup>101</sup>

The sudden burst of energy noted in the stage directions refers to the major dance sequence that is made up of different styles of running as Yue runs away from the officers. The movement sequence dominates the second half of the performance, but in terms of elapsed time in the play itself, it spans two days, which is indicated both by lighting and the way that Yan Qinggu moves between "days" and "nights."

The sequence begins at "night," while Yue waits outside the Imperial Inspector's gate. Under pursuit from officers, Yue begins to perform a series of different *aizi bu*, which are differentiated by style and speed. The sequence begins at a relatively fast speed, showing how much energy Yue has at the beginning of his escape. As "day" comes, the Government Clerk staggers to show tiredness, but as "night" approaches again, he feels another burst of energy and performs another series of runs performed in the shape of "x's" on the stage, starting from the upper stage left corner and moving in a circle to signify travel, to the upper stage right corner, creating an image of distance between himself and the officers.

On the second "day," Yue turns to the audience, and asks "what should I do? His Excellency is coming!"<sup>102</sup> Using both his voice and in his movements, Yue takes smaller and quicker steps, rubbing his hands together by folding the first two knuckles of one hand over the tips of the opposite hand. He then looks for the officials through the magnifying glass that he has tied to his belt and begins to move around in another circle. This time, however, he moves his body to show that he is sneaking away from the officers, by moving in smaller and quieter, but still exaggerated movements. Yue, holding the front of his robe off the ground, brings his knees

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<sup>101</sup> Gong 11.

<sup>102</sup> 《小吏之死》Performance, 2012.

up to his chest and kicks out his leg from the knee down in an exaggerated tiptoe step. Moving into a fast box step, Yue travels in a circle to upper stage right and begins another sequence of runs, this time using smaller and faster steps that move from side to side, instead of forwards and backwards, showing yet another form of running that combines skill with urgency and humor.

The end of the sequence is marked by movements that draw more focus to the hands and the arms in addition to the feet. Yue runs in a circle to the bottom stage left corner, where he starts to move backwards while waving his loose water sleeves in the air. Landing in the upstage right corner, he hops from one side to the other and moves center stage and twirls forward as he manipulates his water sleeves, then jumps into a sitting position with his left leg in the air and his right arm folded behind his head. He then moves into a crossed-leg position and begins to pant, blowing exaggerated puffs of air out of his mouth so that the middle lock of his beard flies into the air in a comical manner.

Yue's death is perfect example of adding humor to a tragic circumstance. Thinking that he has been accused of corruption, Yue begins to beg for his life by frantically moving back and forth and throwing his hands in the air. As he brings his hands down, Yue's face changes and he grasps his heart and begins to stagger from side to side as a heart attack begins to take hold. He throws one water sleeve out at a time and his body begins to stiffen and shake, and he begins to bend over backwards prior to falling flat on the floor, which is the traditional way of performing death. However, in order to add humor to Yue's death, he looks down at the floor, realizes that it is not clean, and sweeps it with his water sleeve, making sure that even his death includes humor. He then falls to the floor.



While Yue is lying on the stage, the officer announces that he is not actually guilty and Yue pops up into a sitting position: "I'm innocent! Aiyo! I've died for no reason!"<sup>103</sup> Resigning himself to his fate, Yue takes the two outer locks of the beard, stretches them out, and turns his head from side to side. He then straightens out his robe to make it look presentable for death, and falls back to the stage.

### His Wife

Unlike other role categories, *chou* can portray both male and female characters. Traditionally, *choudan* (female clowns), much like their male counterparts, are portrayed with comic versions of the costumes and/or makeup worn by other role categories. They will imitate the way a *qingyi* or a *huadan* walks and behaves, but in a slightly more exaggerated or distorted style, which creates humor for the audience. In *Xiaoli zhisi*, Yan Qinggu, as a *chou*, therefore creates a caricature of a *dan* character, utilizing the Four Main Skills in order to do so.

The transition into performing the Wife begins after Yan clears his throat. He then takes on the persona of a stern wife, with his hands on his hips. Yan folds his right hand into the gesture for pointing, where the ring and middle fingers fold down to meet the thumb and the pinky and index fingers are pointing upwards and directed at another person, as she begins to berate the Clerk:

THE WIFE. You are a dead man, is this type of occasion a good one to sneeze at? To offend the Imperial Inspector, your superior, is changing his mind! Ai ya, my fate is truly bitter."<sup>104</sup>

Throughout this sequence, the Wife continues to scold her husband and to walk toward him while pointing at him. It ends with her throwing her hands up in the air and shaking them, a

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<sup>103</sup> 《小吏之死》Performance 2012.

<sup>104</sup> 《小吏之死》Performance 2012.

movement that shows distress and unhappiness. At this point, a musician begins to play a *pipa*, a plucked instrument with a pear-shaped body and fretted fingerboard, which Yan Qinggu, as the Wife, indicates that he hears by moving his head to the side, and he begins to play an invisible *pipa*, at first singing while playing the instrument. After a few minutes, the Wife drops the *pipa* and begins to act out the actions in the aria: "I condemn you, hit you, tell you, punish you, knock you, pinch you, bite you."<sup>105</sup> When the aria is complete, the Wife proceeds to kick him out of the house by moving quickly towards him with a stern face, which can still be seen through the beard on Yan's face, and at that point the Wife changes back into Yue (Figs 7-8).

Fig 7: Yan Qinggu as The Wife; Fig 8: Yan Qinggu as The Wife playing the *pipa*



### Music

The play is written in the *xipi* mode, which is characterized as bright and energetic and is therefore used when there is energetic conflict either within a scene or within a character. In order to highlight the constantly building anxiety, the location of the piece, and the skills of the

<sup>105</sup> 《小吏之死》 Performance 2012.

*chou* actor, atmospheric and vocal composer Jin Guoxian combined *shuban*, the rhythmic speech that is predominately performed by *chou* characters, with folk tunes from Suzhou, thereby bringing audiences more into Yue's world and the world that Yan wanted to create.

### Composition

The music itself is a combination of traditional *jingju* musical patterns and folk music from Eastern China, specifically Jiangsu Province. The mixture of these two musical styles links the performance to several musical conventions in *jingju* and to Yan Qinggu's personal and professional lives, as discussed above. Because *Xiaoli zhisi* is a solo performance, Jin and Yan were able to really test Yan's skill as a musical performer through the incorporation of traditional *chou*, *xiaosheng*, and *laosheng* musical patterns—as well as folk tunes—for both Yue and his Wife.

Within the first fifteen minutes of the play, Yan performs his first aria as the Imperial Inspector, imitating the *laosheng* role category. In order to capture the gravity of the official position and to emphasize just how much bigger the magistrate is than Yue, Jin wrote a couplet for Yan to sing, with the first line sung by the County Magistrate as a *xiaosheng*, and the second line sung by the Imperial Inspector as a *laosheng*.

COUNTY MAGISTRATE. You, you, you, sneezed! Carelessness starts famines unnecessarily.

IMPERIAL INSPECTOR. Eat the mixed five cereals. It's hard to avoid the body's ailments. Small matters, nothing is important or alarming<sup>106</sup>

Their “presence,” and superiority as characters, however, is implied when Yue reacts to them physically on stage. While neither line is threatening, together they do bring in a sense of foreboding that Yue will incorporate into his anxiety.

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<sup>106</sup> 《小吏之死》 Shanghai, 2012.

Within these two lines, audiences can differentiate among the ages of the three characters. The County Magistrate, as a *xiaosheng*, has not reached full adulthood. His melodic passage, *xiaosheng qiang*, is pitched at the same range as the *dan* melodic passages, which are pitched higher, contain more notes per passage, and are more melismatic than *sheng* melodic passages.<sup>107</sup> The Imperial Magistrate, however, in order to denote both the older age and the higher rank, sings his couplet in *laosheng qiang*, in the style of Yan *pai*, or school, named after Yan Jupeng (1890-1942), a Mongolian-born and Shanghai-based *laosheng* actor whose singing is characterized by elegant and light singing.<sup>108</sup> The *laosheng* melodic passages are lower in pitch to show age, and are slower and less melismatic than the *xiaosheng* melodic passages.

### Shuban

*Shuban* is a rhythmic speaking that is accompanied by the tapping of wooden clappers, or *ban*, played by the conductor. This type of speech pattern is mostly reserved for *chou* characters and is usually at the beginning of a performance or before a character exits the stage. Because of its nature as either an introduction or an exit, the *shuban* is mainly used to provide exposition for the audience and to add amusing commentary.

In *Death of a Little Servant*, *shuban* is used by Yue Dianshi to introduce himself: who he is, what his position is, and what has happened before the play started. This sort of introduction is one of, if not the, main uses of *shuban*. In this passage, which actually alternates between the rhythmic speaking of *shuban* and everyday speech, the audience learns about the events that have taken place at a banquet the evening before.

DIANSHI.	Yesterday evening, at the start of the banquet. The country magistrate entertained the high official. All for His Excellency, the Imperial Inspector's return to his home, Jiangnan, to relieve the people.
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<sup>107</sup> Wichmann "Listening" 58

<sup>108</sup> Yan *pai*

Therefore, the Yamen inside.  
The Yamen high officials and low officials, holding cups  
At the host's table, I joined the people in eating,  
Only one remaining god, gave out a sneeze (*sneeze*) and began to  
stir up trouble.  
Ai-ah! Disgraced the refined, disgraced the refined!  
Clever, sneeze in the face of the Imperial Inspector,  
So, I ate nothing sweet, did not sleep soundly.<sup>109</sup>

This passage reveals several aspects of Yue Dianshi's character that will better help the audience understand why Yue becomes so anxious. As a low-ranking government official, Yue hopes that because he works for the Imperial Inspector, he will be noticed and moved up and therefore feels that he is under immense scrutiny and is unable to let go of what has happened. As a result, his anxiety level increases, and he makes the situation bigger than it actually is.

### Suzhou Pingtan

The creative team also utilized folk music forms that originated in Suzhou, not only to create a livelier performance, but also to solidly place Chekhov's original story in China. Suzhou *pingtan*, a storytelling and balladry accompanied by the *pipa*, is mainly reserved for the Wife. By using this specific *quyi*, or “song art” form, the creative team further solidified *Xiaoli zhi's* connection to China, thus highlighting certain aspects of the dynamic between Yue and the other characters and the absurdity of the plot.

The fierceness of the Wife is illustrated through her aria, which is sung in Suzhou *pingtan*. In his performance, Yan, as the Wife, mimes playing the *pipa* for part of her aria, while singing about her fate as Yue's wife.

WIFE. My fate is bitter, most bitter of my own accord. Your desk should not be absurd, should not grow dizzy with success, should not make the boss angrier. I condemn you, hit you, tell you, punish you, knock you, pinch you, bite you, kick you, fundamentally as a warning to you. Food and clothes

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<sup>179</sup> 《小吏之死》Performance 2012.

depend on you retaining the gauze cap. If you lose your job tomorrow, I will leave you.<sup>110</sup>

The pleasant sounds of Suzhou *pingtan* coupled with the rather fierce lyrics of the aria create a strong and amusing contrast for the audience, while also emphasizing Yan's point that Yue is surrounded by people who are much stronger than himself, thus creating more anxiety for him.

The solo format and the use of multiple musical passages and types of delivery helps to highlight several elements necessary to understand this story. First, through his studies in Beijing and Japan, Yan has finally been able to perform more than *wuchou* roles. Second, the presence of multiple roles, role categories, and ages lends a sort of schizophrenic nature to the already anxiety-ridden performance. By having all of these roles performed by the same actor, the character Yue seems to be internalizing the scolding of his superiors, one of whom is younger than he is, and of his wife, and this only increases his anxiety through the end of the play. Third, the *chou*'s ability to jump in and out of different roles becomes the focal point of this particular performance, demonstrating the versatility of the *chou* role category, and of the actor Yan Qinggu.

### Orchestra

The orchestra plays an incredibly vital role in a *jingju* performance, from punctuating speech and movement to accompanying the singing of actors sing to providing the atmospheric music that helps to create the ambience for the audience. In general, the orchestra is positioned downstage left in a box, with the stringed instruments in the front. However, in this production and in keeping with the Ming Dynasty setting, the orchestra was placed upstage and covered the entire width of the stage. When asked about this arrangement, Yan Qinggu responded that "this is quite a traditional arrangement. The very earliest stages in palaces, which are different from

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<sup>180</sup> 《小吏之死》 Performance 2012.

the current [proscenium] stage, had this arrangement. On the oldest stages, the orchestra sits at the back."<sup>111</sup> Li Ruru notes that this arrangement was conventional until the 1920s<sup>112</sup> when the proscenium stage was introduced to China. Having the orchestra placed in this specific location helps to lead the more experienced *jingju* audience to an important conclusion: that this production, while adapted from a Western story, is meant to be a traditional *xiqu* production, especially with the harkening back to a time when Emperors and the upper classes had their own courtyard theatres and troupes to perform for them. With this placement, the audience has become the upper-class audience, while Yan Qinggu is the performer with the orchestra behind him. To the standard *jingju* instruments, Jin added three additional *erhu* and three additional *sanxian*, both common string instruments in the standard *jingju* orchestra. In Yan's view this created a larger and more pleasant sound to the production, while still retaining the overall simplicity of the production.<sup>113</sup>

### Set

Inspired by the traditional simplicity of *jingju* design, the palace theatre arrangement of the Ming Dynasty, and his intense study of *kyōgen*,<sup>114</sup> Yan and the creative team went simple for the set design for *Xiaoli zhisi*. With the orchestra at the back of the stage, the rest of the stage becomes a blank canvas for Yan, as an actor and director, to play with for the rest of the performance. Without a lot of set dressing, the audience is forced to focus on the actor in front of them, which is especially necessary in a solo performance where there are multiple characters and locations.

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<sup>111</sup> Yan "Interview" 2016.

<sup>112</sup> R. Li "Soul" 211.

<sup>113</sup> Yan, "Interview" 2016

<sup>114</sup> R. Li "Soul" 211.

The major feature of the set is a large two-dimensional wooden *wushamao*, a gauze cap with wings on each side worn in the Ming Dynasty by government officials. In *jingju*, *chou* use the *wushamao* as a comedic tool; the *chou* actor moves his ears to make the two wings of the cap move up and down, showing anxiety or other emotions.<sup>115</sup> As a set piece, the *wushamao* was hung above and behind the orchestra platform. When the play started, the *wushamao* wings, in the shape of large coins, started off askew. The coins are traditionally used for *chou* characters who are also officials, representing the absurdity and off-kilter nature of the plot. As Yue's anxiety grows, the wings of the *wushamao* gradually fall, with the first wing falling part of the way after Yue has sneezed after the introduction, thus beginning the anxiety that drives the rest of the performance. The second wing begins to fall when he starts to worry about the letter that he has written to the Imperial Inspector, and the whole hat finally comes down when Yue dies, showing that his anxiety has taken his position and his hat away from him. Yan, in our interview, expressed the idea that the falling cap represented Yue's anxiety, his loss of rank, and his eventual death. The falling wings behind Yan did not distract from the action on stage. In fact each time a wing fell, whether it was a half fall or to the floor, it was almost as if a phase of Yue's life and career. The wings finally fall with a loud crash onto the stage when Yue dies, marking the end of his life and his career.

### **Lighting**

The lighting in this performance was used for several purposes. As in many theatre forms, lighting is used to demarcate place, time, and people, which is especially needed in a solo performance. Li Ruru notes that this use of lighting is very typical of *haipai*, which, as stated



previously, tends to be more daring and more experimental than lighting in Beijing *jingju*. The lighting, while more varied than in traditional *jingju*, was simpler than what is typical in *haipai*, which is to be expected given the length of the performance and nature of a solo performance. When the performance first opens, the audience sees a window shape on the floor, meant to represent the study where Yue studied for his exams. Later in the performance, the shape of a doorway appears on the floor to mark the Imperial Inspector's home; Yue stands downstage and talks to the gatekeeper, who is played by the conductor and is also lit up in his position in the orchestra.

Contrasts of light and dark lighting begin early in the production. During the introduction, Yue sneezes and the lights immediately take on the blue color, establishing the idea that Yue's anxiety will be marked by the darker light. As the play continues, light is used to emphasize Yue's anxiety through the major movement sequence of running away from the officials to his death. At the same time, the light represents night time, when Yue's anxiety is the greatest. What also helps to establish this idea of night and day is that after a major movement sequence, bright lights are brought up and Yue starts to stumble gracefully around the stage, showing that he has run all night and is now tired during the day.

### **Costume and Makeup**

The costume and make up for this production are simple. Yan wears a gauze cap without the two wings, a simple robe, boots typical of all civil characters, and a black beard indicating that the character is around thirty years old. This beard is made up of three locks of hair, like that of a *laosheng*. Along with the costume, the makeup was traditional of a *chou*: a small white patch that encompassed the eyes and went halfway down the bridge of the nose. Over the small white patch,

are two short and small eyebrows. All of these elements together present a humorous and yet beautiful picture that is conventional for the *chou* role category (Fig 9).



Fig 9: Makeup demonstration for *Xiaoli zhisi*

The use of a *wushamao* in the physical set not only hints at Yue's political and professional aspirations but is also an exaggeration of the *wushamao* as a comedic tool in the *chou*'s arsenal. As a costume piece, Yue wears a *wushamao* without wings, symbolic of his low-level position in the government. As the main set piece, the *wushamao* with the two wing flaps shows Yue's ambition to become a higher-ranked official, which will never happen because of all of the misunderstandings that occur during the story.

To add to the idiosyncrasy of Yue's costume, Yan added a magnifying glass attached to a piece of rope hanging off of his belt, and used glasses throughout the production to read. In Yue's case, the presence of a magnifying glass tells the audience that even though he has been studying for so long, he is unable to move past his low-level status. Also, the magnifying glass and the glasses are not traditional *jingju* props leads to a humorous juxtaposition, which says that Yue's eyes have grown to be so bad from studying so much.

## Conclusion

I believe that *Xiaoli zhisi* lies within the first and second relationships of Carlson's Seven Relationships, because the final performance, while experimental, does not absorb foreign elements other than the basic story. Instead, Yan and the creative team chose to explore within *jingju* convention for their experiments. In bringing the *chou* to the forefront and then working with, for instance, different *bu*, or steps, to demonstrate anxiety, the creative team created an adaptation that looked familiar to their audiences, with anything that had been foreign completely absorbed into the *jingju* production.

Despite being a production of *haipai*, which is generally recognized for bringing in influences from non-Chinese sources, the creative team of *Xiaoli zhisi* actually did the opposite, instead looking inward to the rich variety of *xiqu* techniques and conventions in order to enhance expressive capacity of one specific Role Category.

I would argue that by looking inward, the creative team actually performed a bigger experiment in terms of *haipai* performance, which some would argue relies too heavily on Western staging, instrumentation, and other techniques to bring in audiences. While it is difficult in modern China to get completely away from Western staging techniques, Yan and the Creative team, all of whom were professional *xiqu* practitioners, relied on their own backgrounds and education to create a production that exposed audiences to a variety of *xiqu* techniques bundled into a single, solo *jingju* performance.

The resulting performance remains traditional in *mise en scene* and clearly recognizable and familiar in the eyes of the audience. However, by looking outside of *jingju* and absorbing other *xiqu* techniques, the creative team has actually provided other *jingju* practitioners with a

striking example of how inspiration from other Chinese theatre forms can actually enhance a performance.

In creating this production, the Creative team also examined and commented on the need to save face and add to the honor of the family name. While the Imperial exams of the Ming and Qing dynasties of course no longer exist, the pressure of The National College Entrance Exam (*gaokao* 高考), held every year as a prerequisite to college, is enormous for all middle and high school students in China. A *China Daily* article reports that in 2013, the number of suicides among middle and high school students had reached 79, with 63% of those suicides occurring during the second half of the school year.<sup>116</sup> Despite the comedic nature of *Xiaoli zhisi*, the Creative team does hit upon a nerve within Chinese culture that is felt both within and outside of China itself.

The pressure to do well academically and socially is apparent in all cultures. In the United States, the news is saturated with the recent university cheating scandals amongst celebrities; with essays written by self-proclaimed Tiger Mom, Amy Chua; and with a constant stream of commentary about academic testing. It is no wonder that current American as well as Chinese children are finding school and academics hard to bear. What *Xiaoli zhisi* does is to view this kind of pressure in a comedic light, doing what the *chou* does best: comedically questioning the status quo, in this case, why we place so much pressure on ourselves and our children.

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<sup>116</sup> Zhao

### CHAPTER 3: *ZHULI XIAOJIE* (《朱莉小姐》, *MISS JULIE*) (2010, 2012)

#### Introduction

A *xiao huadan*, dressed in pink and green and playing the role of Guiside (桂思娣 Kristin), enters the stage carrying a tray. She looks toward stage left and shakes her head. Turning to the audience, she begins to explain why the tray is full.

GUISIDE. Miss Julie has been scowling for days.  
I'm the cook bringing dinner to her boudoir.  
Before he left for his trip, Master told me  
to take extra good care of Miss Julie.  
Julie has been long-engaged.  
It beats me why she's still not married.  
Her fiancé looked deflated as he left today.  
I'm dying to get the whole scoop if I may.<sup>117</sup>

This is the opening of *Zhuli Xiaojie* (《朱丽小姐》), a *jingju* adaptation of August Strindberg's classic play, *Miss Julie* (1888). Written by the playwriting team of William Huizhu Sun and Faye Chunfang Fei in 2010, and performed in Shanghai and abroad, *Zhuli Xiaojie* was a response to a couple of issues that Sun saw with traditional *xiqu* in the 20th century: 1) Scripts were repetitive and no longer relevant to younger audiences, and 2) Shakespeare adaptations, which had been in abundance since in the 1990s, were, Sun felt, no longer new and exciting.<sup>118</sup> Sun and the 2010 and 2012 production teams laid out several goals that they felt the production could accomplish: 1) comply with the spirit of Strindberg's original, 2) introduce *Miss Julie* and Strindberg to China, 3) be true to the spirit of *jingju*, and 4) use traditional methods and conventions to introduce new topics to both domestic and international audiences. All of these goals revolve around two main issues that faced the playwrights wished to make *Zhuli Xiaojie* appealing and

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<sup>117</sup> Sun William “*Zhuli Xiaojie*” 201.

<sup>118</sup> Sun “Interview” 2015.

accessible enough to attract two types of audiences—one that had remained faithful to *jingju*, and one that believed *jingju* was old fashioned and no longer relevant in 21st century China.

The methods and practices used to pursue these goals will be examined throughout this chapter, where I will analyze aspects of two different productions of *Zhuli Xiaojie*. The first production was a thesis project directed by Zhao Qun, a Masters of Directing student at The Shanghai Theatre Academy (STA), while the second production was directed by an established director, Guo Yu, who agreed that using "Chinese voices and methods to introduce universal artistic topics to global audiences"<sup>119</sup> would serve as a tool not only for re-popularizing *jingju*, but also for helping Chinese audiences to understand Western theatre and for Western audiences to understand *jingju*. Both productions bent and adapted conventions in order to adhere to the goals of keeping both *Miss Julie* and *jingju* alive, while also demonstrating that *jingju*, as an art form, is not as static as some audiences might believe.

### Strindberg and Miss Julie

By the time he wrote *Miss Julie*, August Strindberg was an established, but struggling, playwright. With the failure of his play, *The Father*, Strindberg had to move his family several times before they finally moved into Skovlyst, a crumbling family estate owned by a Countess Anna Louise Frankenau and run by her servant Ludvig Hansen and his sister Martha Magdalena. The characters in the house and in Strindberg's literary circles provided the inspiration for his play about an upper-class woman who sleeps with her servant, Jean, on the Midsummer's Eve. Strindberg wrote *Miss Julie* during the Naturalist Movement, which was highly influenced by Charles Darwin's book, *The Origin of Species*, and greatly championed by French playwright Emile Zola, who stated that theatre should become a place for observation -- scientific study of

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<sup>119</sup> Sun "Interview" October 2015.

human nature and the destinies that resulted from those natures.<sup>120</sup> To that end, Strindberg, who had declared himself to be a gentleman doctor, used his plays to examine human nature, but not in the way that Zola suggested, which Amy Strahler Halzapfel describes as “lab rats,”<sup>121</sup> but as a vivisector, dissecting human emotions through live humans as scientists would dissect live animals in an actual vivisection.<sup>122</sup> Strindberg was also greatly influenced by his studies in the psychology of men versus women and the work of Hyppolyte Bernheim who had researched the medical uses of hypnosis.<sup>123</sup> Scientists, such as Bernheim, believed that certain populations of people, especially women, were more prone to bouts of hysteria because “their frames were smaller than those of the male, and their neural reserves consequently less.”<sup>124</sup> John L. Greenway quotes Margaret Cleves, M.D. who wrote in her autobiography entitled *Autobiography of a Neurasthene* (1910), that because she was a woman who was raised with male manners, she had ended up with a “sprained brain,”<sup>125</sup> indicating that the idea of raising a “half woman-half man,”<sup>126</sup> which characterizes Miss Julie’s upbringing, can significantly alter the psychology of a woman. This train of thought is particular telling of the trajectory that *Miss Julie* takes and Strindberg’s inclusion of Bernheim’s hypnosis research.

Strindberg wrote *The Father* and *Miss Julie* within the framework of a vivisection and, having opened up the minds and the emotions of his characters, brought forth a number of issues that were heavily debated or discussed in the late 1800s. This research, conducted at the same time as the rise of the modern and new woman, helped to assure men that whatever women were

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<sup>120</sup> Holzapfel 345

<sup>121</sup> Holzapfel 345

<sup>122</sup> Holzapfel 329-30

<sup>123</sup> Greenway 24

<sup>124</sup> Greenway 29

<sup>125</sup> qtd in Greenway 29

<sup>126</sup> Strindberg, “Miss Julie” 108

doing to increase their independence as an equal gender, was just a moment of hysteria that would eventually pass with medical attention.

Strindberg had written *Miss Julie* as a *sorgespel*, or domestic tragedy,<sup>127</sup> as a reaction to the contemporary theatre of the late 1800s, where more focus was placed on the illusionary aspects, rather than on the characters and the plots themselves. As a result, he used *Miss Julie* as a way to “‘modernize the form’ with ‘up-to-date contents’ and thereby to the naturalistic stage with its locus in the kitchen surrounded by familiar household objects as a frame.”<sup>128</sup> Strindberg strived for regular speech, for regular objects to resonate with audiences, to show them that the theatre did not have to rely on the illusionary to tell the story, but could rely on speech to grasp the mental trajectories of his characters.

The mental states of Strindberg’s characters and the conflicts that arise are only amplified by the tightness of the space that they occupy. While it is understood that the estate that the play takes place on is sprawling and able to accommodate a festival, the locus of the action is in the kitchen, a place that is reserved for the servants and rarely visited by the upper classes. However, Stockenström notes that Strindberg favored the “small cast, on a small stage, in a small house” because that, along with speech, created the illusion of reality.<sup>129</sup> The physical closeness, or understood closeness, between the three characters is a product of the extra-ordinary, or special, circumstances of the night: The Midsummer Night’s Eve

a festival of pagan origin in Northern Europe, which has particular charm of its own when the sun does not set. It is a night on which with the scents and sounds of the intense Northern summer drive people mad” between the characters themselves and the actors and the audience creates an experience that would make sure to resonate with 1800s European audiences.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Stockenström 44

<sup>128</sup> Stockenström 41-42

<sup>129</sup> Stockenström 42

<sup>130</sup> Jain 163



The utilization of the extra-ordinary circumstances and of hypnosis helps to explain the plot and sudden role reversals between Miss Julie and Jean. First, Miss Julie is already understood to be compromised through hereditary: she was raised by a feminist mother who raised her as a boy, she has just split from her fiancé because he was not enough for her, and she is menstruating – all elements that, according to medical theories at the time, point to a weakened mental state, which has been increased by alcohol and being the natural recipient of traits that are deemed subservient, makes her susceptible to suggestion. By the end of the play, Jean, who, by virtue of being male and in possession of more will, can easily dominate Miss Julie through hypnosis because of her alcohol-induced lethargy, Bernheim's first stage of hypnosis,<sup>131</sup> and natural weaknesses.

MISS JULIE. Then let's pretend you're him and I'm you! You acted so well just now, when you went down on your knees – then you were the aristocrat – or – have you never to the theatre and seen a hypnotist? (*Jean gestures assent*) He says to his subject, 'take a broom!' and he takes it; he says 'Sweep!' and it sweeps –

JEAN. But then the subject has to be asleep.

MISS JULIE. (*Frantically*). I'm already asleep – it's as if the whole room was full of smoke; you look like an iron stove, dressed all in black with a top hat – your eyes glow like coals in a dying fire – and your face is a white spot, like ashes. (*the sunlight has now fallen upon the floor and is shining on JEAN*) It's so nice and warm – (*she rubs her hands as though warming them before a fire*) – and so light – and so peaceful.

JEAN. (*takes the razor and places it in her hand*). Here's the broom! Go, now, while it's still light – out to the barn – and... (*whispers in her ear*)

MISS JULIE. (*awake*) Thank you. Now I'm going to rest.<sup>132</sup>

Jean acts the part of the hypnotist. He has complete control over her, until the Count comes home and the bell rings. At that point, whatever will Jean is feeling is completely gone because for him

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<sup>131</sup> Greenway 25

<sup>132</sup> Strindberg, "Miss Julie" 109

to dream bigger, to dream for a time when he can free himself from his present circumstances is a violation of the moral order that society has established.<sup>133</sup> Miss Julie, in this circumstance and as horrible as it is, has the ability to remove herself from her present circumstances, but Jean, the hypnotizer and controller, is unable to escape the bell.

The analysis behind *Miss Julie* is complex and because of that, the play is one of most often discussed plays in theatre classes around the world. To adapt the play into a different genre in a different country, while also not losing of the original meanings in translation, is a monumental task. However, there are aspects of the original play, such as the morality of Miss Julie's and Jean's actions and Strindberg's desire for a small cast to portray a realistic picture could be translated onto the *jingju* stage and resonate with audiences. The question is, do the gender and class debates also translate as smoothly?

### **Pre-Production**

This chapter focuses on two specific productions of *Zhuli Xiaojie*, one performed in 2010 and another performed in 2012. The majority of the performance analysis in this chapter is focused on both the 2010 and 2012 versions of *Zhuli Xiaojie* with special attention paid to Guiside's characterization, which changed dramatically from the first version of 2010 to the second production in 2012, will include both productions. Added to the second version was a series of short scenes that not only fleshed out Kristin's role as a commentator and a well-rounded character, but also established the origin of Miss Julie's emotional arc. An extra challenge for both productions was how to take a living room drama, which is characterized with a lot of dialogue, and bring it alive through *jingju* performance conventions.

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<sup>133</sup> Stockenström 48

As a team, Sun and Fei had previously written adaptations of *Oedipus Rex* and *Hedda Gabbler* for other forms of *xiqu*, Chinese traditional theatre. *Zhuli Xiaojie* came about as an idea for a directing seminar that Sun was asked to teach at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts (NACTA 国家戏剧学院) in Beijing in 1997.

Sun knew that he wanted to do something other than Shakespeare:

*Xiqu* Shakespeare had been done. Many times. Even though that was almost twenty years ago. *Xiqu* Shakespeare had started... I had written a paper, an English paper, about *Othello*. That was the very first. In 1949, after the Communist Revolution. And once it started, many companies followed, and I thought it was mainly a play with forms, with styles. I was more interested in modern drama. More relevant to today's Chinese.<sup>134</sup>

Sun provided his students with one of the most important scenes between Miss Julie and Jean, which I will call the "Kiss my Boot" scene, believing that since this short scene only required two people, it should not be too difficult for a group of directing students. Sun instructed the group to experiment with the scene using whatever form of *xiqu* that they wanted.

However, Sun failed to take two major differences into account. The first was the difference between Chinese and Western methods of directing. In traditional *xiqu*, movements, blocking, and voice are taught via imitation in what is called the "Mouth/Heart" Method. Li writes that this method serves two main functions:

First, like any artistic craft, *jingju* training needs demonstration and face-to-face tuition. As seen earlier in physical movement, aria, and speech training, there are numerous elements that written scripts cannot convey (in the past, moreover, many performers were illiterate). The learning process starts from careful imitation. The second function lies in the aesthetic principles which decide how the conventions are presented on the stage and how the trainee can 'develop his innovation within the bounds of tradition'<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Sun "Interview", October 2015.

<sup>135</sup> R. Li *Soul* 75.

The teacher will model the body and the voice, and the student will imitate, thus ensuring that the master's original work is preserved. This method will allow for some freedom for the student once the student has mastered the Five Canons. In professional productions of new *jingju* plays, there is usually a *jidao* (technique director) who works with young performers to create new characters with the tools of the Five Canons. Sun, however, did not provide that guidance needed to build a new scene from a play that they were not familiar with, which led to the second difference.

The scene that Sun gave to the students is a famous scene in *Miss Julie* and clearly illustrates a duel power play between genders and status: Jean as a man and a servant and Julie as a woman and the mistress. In the scene, Julie and Jean have been drinking and dancing and Julie, in essence, orders Jean to have a drink with her.

JEAN. I'm not really a beer drinker; but if it's an order.  
MISS JULIE. Order? -- As a gentleman you should keep your lady company, I think.  
JEAN. You're right, of course [*Opens another bottle, takes a glass*]  
MISS JULIE. Now drink my health [JEAN *hesitates*] I do believe you're shy!  
JEAN. [*kneeling, in a humorous parody; raises his glass*]. My mistress's health!  
MISS JULIE. Bravo! -- Now finish things off properly and kiss my shoe as well!  
JEAN. *hesitates, but the boldly grasps her foot, which he kisses lightly.*  
MISS JULIE. Excellent! You should have been an actor.<sup>136</sup>

In our interview, Sun acknowledged that he chose the wrong scene for this seminar not only because of the traditional methods of teaching *xiqu*, but also because "kissing a woman's boot, that does not happen in China"<sup>137</sup> because the act of kissing a foot is considered to be erotic, rather than dirty as it is considered to be in the West. Sun notes that "bolder students" tried, but that fewer and fewer students attended class because it was too difficult, eventually giving up altogether.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Strindberg "Miss Julie" 78.

<sup>137</sup> Sun "Interview" October 2015.

<sup>138</sup> Sun "Interview" October 2015.

Two years later, Sun organized and presented a conference in honor of his graduate advisor, Richard Schechner, New York University Professor of Performance Studies. At this conference, Sun, again, presented his argument for more *jingju* adaptations of Western Literature. He discussed the "advantages of *xiqu* compared to Western drama and *huaaju*, and the disadvantages of *xiqu*,"<sup>139</sup> voicing his concerns about the lack of newer and more relevant performances for younger audiences. His solution was that companies and academies begin to look towards Western drama and literature, such as *The Farmhand and the Young Lady* (《长工小姐》 *Miss Julie*)<sup>140</sup> in order to create new *xiqu* performances that would include new characters and stories.<sup>141</sup> His presentation, which perhaps unconsciously echoed Strindberg's sentiment that pre-Naturalism characters are too one-dimensional,<sup>142</sup> caught the attention of a Zhao Qun, a former *jingju* actor, a Masters of Fine Arts in Directing student at STA, who decided that this would be her Thesis project for her Masters Degree. She asked Sun to write a draft of what became *Zhuli Xiaojie* for her to direct.

Sun remembers the casting process for the 2010 as being simple. Zhao cast her husband, Fu Xiru, a *sheng* actor with the Shanghai *Jingju* Company who had previously played Prince Zi Dan in their adaptation of *Hamlet* (*Wangzi dan chouji* 《王子蛋仇记》), as Xiang Qiang (Jean). As *Zhuli Xiaojie*, Zhao cast a fellow student, Xu Jiali, a *qingyi* actor who had spent four years in Singapore and had received her MFA in the United Kingdom before returning to China. Her choice for Guiside (Kristin) was a *choudan* (丑蛋 female clown) actor named Xiao Jian, who had also performed in Sun's previous production of Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* in Singapore. When asked why Zhao wanted to cast a *choudan* as Guiside, Xiao believed it was because Zhao was

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<sup>139</sup> Sun "Interview" October 2015.

<sup>140</sup> One of the original Chinese translations for *Miss Julie*. A *changgong* is a long-term farmhand.

<sup>141</sup> Sun "Interview" October 2015.

<sup>142</sup> Strindberg "Preface" 58.

interested in giving Kristin a certain humor that is opposite of Strindberg's original character. Sun, who had not written *Guiside* as a *choudan* believed it was because Zhao wanted to play up the “grotesque” nature of a *choudan*, which is a Western spin on a *jingju* convention that will be discussed later in the chapter<sup>143</sup>.

Rounding out the creative team, were playwright Faye Chunfang Fei, who was living in New York at the time; composer, Qi Huan, who was a professor in the *jingju* department of the STA Music Department. Sun remembers the production meetings as a collaborative process among the creative team. Despite Sun and Fei's experiences with other forms of *xiqu*, Sun noted in our interview that he learned a lot about *jingju* play and aria structure from meetings with Zhao, Xu Jiali (the *jingju* actress who was to play Zhuli Xiaojie), and the composer. In these meetings, held at the coffee shop on the STA campus, the four would discuss how to adapt Strindberg's original play into a *jingju* production that would also preserve the sentiment and themes of the original play.

The 2012 version of *Zhuli Xiaojie* involved a different creative team. This production was directed by Guo Yu, who, at the time, was the dean of the *jingju* college and was about to replace Sun as Vice President of STA. Guo was a graduate of the STA Directing Department and was a trained *laosheng* actor. Sun had suggested Guo accompany the company on an international tour to six countries. The main purpose was that Guo could see Zhao's version and then add to it, thus lending his name to next production. Over the tour, Liu Lu, a PhD student from STA, took over the role of Zhuli Xiaojie while Zhao Qun continued on as director. Midway through the tour, Zhao Qun took over the role of Zhulie Xiaojie and then Guo Yu took over the production later

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<sup>143</sup> Xiao “Interview” 2016; Sun Interview April 2016

that summer with Zhao Qun as Miss Julie.<sup>144</sup> Other casting changes included a replacement for Xiang Qiang and Guiside. Zhao Qun did not feel comfortable playing Zhuli Xiaojie opposite her husband, Fu Xiru, who also had scheduling conflicts.<sup>145</sup> Guo Yu then replaced him with Yan Qinggu, a first-ranked *chou* actor from the Shanghai *Jingju* Company, who was, what Sun called, an “intellectual *chou*.”<sup>146</sup> Yan had been at Sun’s Schechner Conference and knew Guo Yu, who asked him to be a part of the new expanded version and he agreed. However, because Yan Qinggu was playing Xiang Qiang, Guo felt that there could not be too *chou* actors, which meant that Xiao Jian was replaced with a *huadan* actor.

Both the 2010 and 2012 creative teams represent a mixture of *jingju* and Western theatre professionals. As a result, the adaptation process was, on the whole, collaborative with actors, such as Xiao Jian, taking the initiative on their own choreography, or Qi and Zhao giving Sun suggestions about which acting and musical conventions they wanted to include in order to adapt *Miss Julie* into a true *jingju*, while also retaining the major plot points of *Miss Julie*, including the “Kiss My Boot” sequence.

### **The Adaptation Process**

Sun and Fei’s approach to adapting *Zhuli xiaojie* was to transport Strindberg’s original to a Chinese country town on the night of a temple festival, an event known for extra-daily behaviors. This not only brings the story closer to the audience geographically, but also helps them to become emotionally connected to the characters. It also allows for the playwrights to create *jingju* versions of the original characters by analyzing their age, gender, physicality, and behavioral traits and the selecting a role category for each character. In observing these

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<sup>144</sup> Sun “Interview” October 2015

<sup>145</sup> Sun “Interview” October 2015

<sup>146</sup> Sun “Interview” October 2015

performances, I have found that scenes must also be created so they can be performed through the performance techniques deriving from the Four Skills and Four Main Role Categories, while also incorporating specific scenes that are iconic to the original play.

### **Conventions Used and Adapted**

#### **Role Categories**

Creating *jingju* characters out of Western characters is a process of mixing and matching the various personality traits of each character with the role category. With this process in mind, the Creative teams pinpointed the major personality traits of the major characters, such as Miss Julie's flirty and direct nature, or Jean's poor and arrogant traits and paired them with the traits of the subcategories of the Four Role Categories, even moving beyond *jingju* into *kunqu* for more role categories.

#### **Zhuli Xiaojie (朱丽小姐 Miss Julie)**

Miss Julie, as a character, is described by Strindberg as "half -woman and half- man,"<sup>147</sup> which was not uncommon for a woman of the time,<sup>148</sup> in order to combat the juxtaposition of status and misogyny. Miss Julie, because of her upbringing, has certain components to her personality that highlight the duality of genders within her: her directness, flirtatious nature, and disregard for status, all interesting personality traits for the Western stage, but adapting Miss Julie for *jingju* was a challenge.

The 2010 and 2012 Creative teams chose to portray Zhuli Xiaojie as a *huadan* and *qingyi*-leaning *huashan* because, as Gao Yu, the director of the 2012 production, writes, Zhuli's main personality traits are that she is "direct, obvious, and understandable,"<sup>149</sup> Guo continues this idea

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<sup>147</sup> Strindberg "Preface" 108.

<sup>148</sup> Prideux 13.

<sup>149</sup> Guo 48.



by writing that Zhuli cannot be adequately represented by just one role category,<sup>150</sup> therefore the two role categories were chosen and combined to create a role that would adequately represent not only *jingju*, but also the original Miss Julie, who, above all, wishes to be free, to be different from others, and to show her personality to not only herself, but also to the world.

Zhao writes that when Zhuli is drunk and flirtatious, the characteristics of the *huadan* role, which is known for its vivacious and sometimes flirtatious performance skills, comes to the forefront. In *Zhuli Xiaojie*, Zhuli's flirtatious nature is amplified by the festival and the extraordinary behaviors it encourages, such as drinking. Zhuli spends a majority of the play as a *huadan*, creating a feeling of fun and teasing between the two characters. As the mood and tensions arise, however, Zhuli becomes "burned with desire"<sup>151</sup> and begins to speak directly to Xiang Qiang (Jean), another feature of the *huadan* role category and one of Zhuli's iconic personality traits. It is at her death that Zhuli's *qingyi* skills comes to forefront. Her despair at having lost her reputation and pet bird overwhelm her so much that she sings out her emotions. This scene, which will be discussed later in the chapter, shows the poignancy of Miss Julie's death against a happy picture of Jean and Kristin's wedding as they drape a long red cloth over Miss Julie's body.

#### *Xiang Qiang (项强 Jean)*

In discussions about *Miss Julie*, much could be said and written about Jean's desire for a better life and his memories of the better life that he supposedly had before coming to work for Miss Julie and her family. The Creative teams determined Xiang Qiang's personality to be that of a man who is handsome, young, but poor with high aspirations for the future. To create this

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<sup>150</sup> Guo 249.

<sup>151</sup> Guo 249.

personality, Sun, Zhou, and Fei looked to both *jingju* and *kunqu* to find the specific role categories, landing on a combination of a *chou*, a *xiaosheng*, and an arrogant *qiongsheng*, a *kunqu* role category that depicts a “deprived and disheartened male”<sup>152</sup> or “poverty-stricken young scholars”<sup>153</sup>, sometimes with “high expectations for the future.”<sup>154</sup> By branching out into *kunqu*, the creative team showed a willingness to explore other forms of *xiqu* to find the specific personality traits that fit with their own interpretation of the character. Each role category is demonstrated in a particular way that is true to both the characteristics of that personality type and to Jean’s personality. His outward handsomeness is displayed in his makeup, his portrayal focuses on singing like a *xiaosheng*; and he is poor like a *qiongsheng*, but he is arrogant, which is a dominating feature of the *chou* role category. Throughout the play, Jean demonstrates his wide knowledge of etiquette, but after he sleeps with Miss Julie, he is more self-assured and arrogant than before, leading him to not understand that his actions and desires lead to certain consequences for the people around him.

#### Guise (桂思娣 Kristin)

Strindberg writes in the preface to *Miss Julie* that “[Kristin] is a minor character, and therefore my intention was only to sketch her in as I did the Pastor and the Doctor in *The Father*.”<sup>155</sup> He then further justifies his decision because “ordinary people are to some extent abstract when working; which is to say, they lack individuality and show only one side of themselves while performing their tasks, and as long as the spectator feels no need to see the character from several sides, my abstract depiction will probably suffice.”<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Zhou 284.

<sup>153</sup> Dolby105.

<sup>154</sup> Qiu, 56.

<sup>155</sup> Strindberg “Preface” 63.

<sup>156</sup> Strindberg “Preface” 63.

Strindberg's description of Kristin is that she is a "female slave."<sup>157</sup> Much as in Medieval Theatre, which depicted allegories to teach common people a lesson, Kristin is the representation of morality and religious faith in Strindberg's play. She judges Miss Julie and Jean from the safety of her moral and religious standing, knowing that she is the correct one in this scenario.

In terms of *jingju* and *kunqu*, the most obvious choice of role category for Kristin was the *huadan*, or flower *dan*, a role category known for the portrayal of maids to the *qingyi* characters. *Huadan* are flirty and are sometimes comical characters, so much so that they are often fan favorites because they can often create commentary about the story and are able to add humor to otherwise serious situations. The depiction of Guiside as a *huadan* is the complete opposite of Strindberg's original depiction of Kristin who is straightforward and definitely not a flirt, choosing to cling on to religion as her emotional release.

#### Choudan Guiside (2010)

The *choudan* Guiside (Fig 1) provided the 2010 *Zhuli Xiaojie* with a bit outright humor that is not present in the original. Xiao Jian commented that he believed it was because Zhao Qun wanted to emphasize the grotesque and the humor in the Guiside's character.<sup>158</sup> Xiao Jian was also given more freedom to exaggerate his movements, to be bold, and to "feel good about it. She feels like she is THE prettiest in the world"<sup>159</sup> and is able to back up that belief with movements that both *qingyi* and *huadan* would not perform. "I think, for example, when I play the character a certain part, I can sometimes, I could be wider, or bolder, than if a female played the role."<sup>160</sup> Later

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<sup>157</sup> Strindberg "Preface" 63.

<sup>158</sup> Xiao "Interview" 2016.

<sup>159</sup> Xiao "Interview" 2016.

<sup>160</sup> Xiao "Interview" 2016.

in the interview Xiao Jian points to several instances in his performance where he utilizes ham acting to emphasize the grotesqueness of the character (Fig 10).



Fig 10. *Choudan*  
Guiside

For example, when I say "why have you slapped my man?" I consciously made it closer to ham acting, so that it represents the wildness and ugliness of the character. The tone I use is something closer to a scream...so it is really wild. Sometimes a male actor can give a little more power and punch compared to a female actor. I guess for [the directors], the *chou* portraying the lady is closer to the character they wanted to portray. For example, it's humorous, it's not as pretty. I think maybe they used this character, used a clown portraying a female [to] give it a signature, or a hint, of what kind of character she is.<sup>161</sup>

For Xiao Jian, the role allowed him to go to greater extremes in characterization than he would otherwise. Xian was able to read through the script and create his own choreography and movement based on the emotional state of the character with the idea that audiences will be expecting beauty, even if it is a grotesque beauty.

One specific instance in Xiao Jian's creativity demonstrated Guiside's personality, what Sun described as a "peeping maid"<sup>162</sup>, meaning that Guiside, through her position as the maid, is

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<sup>161</sup> Xiao "Interview" 2016.

<sup>162</sup> Sun "Interview," October 2015

hyper aware and observant to know and understand everything happening around her. Guiside eavesdrops on Jean and Miss Julie while they are sleeping together.

GUISIDE. *enters.* Gosh! Now she is in his room! Why did I bring over the villages? I was just hoping to scare her a bit, so she'll remember who she is and go back to her boudoir. How could I know they got so close they pushed her into...Darn! *she sings.*  
Lion dance is making a racket,  
The dark room is eerily quiet.  
Are they enjoying a lovers' slumber?  
My heart is leaping from its chamber!  
I can hear the bed squeaking,  
I can imagine them coupling!  
Go, Miss Julie, slap him on the face!  
And put him in his place! In his place! *Exit.*<sup>163</sup>

In Xiao Jian's version, he performs a headstand at the door in order to express Guiside's anxiety, but still making sure to keep his chosen movement within the realm, *fúdù* (幅度), of what the audiences would be expecting.

So, in the show, there is a routine, I think, it's at the end of the show, there's a peeping routine that I was looking at through the gap of the door, looking at what's happening inside. So, I involved [a] movement to portray my anger, my anxiety, but at the same time, I'm still peeping, just a different style of portraying character, but on the other hand, I also need to fulfill the skillfulness that audiences are anticipating, either in singing or movement, that actors need to offer.<sup>164</sup>

Xiao Jian was conscious that creating new movement would not only satisfy Zhao Qun and Xiao Jian's image of the character but would also help the audience identify the character and the production as a *jingju*.

Typically, *chou* characters are used as supporting characters to the *dan* and the *sheng*. Very rarely are *chou* characters used as main characters. *Choudan* are common, but their presence as major characters are even more rare. The presence of a *choudan* in an experimental

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<sup>163</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 241.

<sup>164</sup> Xiao "Interview" April 2016.

*jingju* production demonstrates that *chou* can be more than supporting characters. By making Guiside a three-dimensional character as opposed to Strindberg's two-dimensional Kirstin, Xiao Jian succeeds in showing audiences that *choudan* can portray leading roles, thus proving that the role category system is alive and flexible, which is especially encouraging considering Yan Qinggu's previously stated concerns that the *chou* was fading.<sup>165</sup>

Throughout my interviews and discussions with members of the creative teams, the one common modifier used to describe this particular casting was 丑怪 (*chouguai*), or grotesque. This I will argue, is a Western concept that has been superimposed onto Guiside, most likely because of Sun's training in the United States. In *jingju*, the *chou* remains as the one role category to continue playing female characters because it is humorous. Imposing the idea of "grotesque" onto a character that is actually not meant to be grotesque, but funny, shows the desire on the part of the creative team for shock value, while not completely understanding the nature of the *chou*.

#### Xiao Huadan Guiside (2012)

For the second performance, Guiside's role category was changed back to the more traditional *xiao huadan*, or younger *huadan*. Xiao Jian was not completely clear about why this change took place, stating that he only did a few performances in Shanghai and believed that the Creative team decided to stick with STA students for future performances.<sup>166</sup> Sun, in our interview, attributed the casting changes to the fact that Zhao Qun had wanted to perform the role of Zhuli Xiaojie and felt that she could not play Zhuli Xiaojie opposite her husband, Fu Xiru. Once Yan Qinggu stepped in to play Xiang Qiang opposite Zhao Qun, the Creative team felt that there should not be two *chou* characters on the same stage opposite one *huashan*, despite Yan not playing a

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<sup>165</sup> R. Li, "Soul" 200

<sup>166</sup> Xiao "Interview" 2016

traditional *chou* character. As a result, Guiside was changed to a *xiao huadan* because that was the actor's designated role category and she was physically proportional with Yan Qinggu as Xiang Qiang. The creative team, this time led by new director Guo Yu, believed that this made for a more balanced production.<sup>167</sup> There is, however, I believe, another way to view this particular change. Despite wanting to take the helm of an experimental *jingju* project, Guo as an incoming Vice President of the University may have been more concerned with STA politics than Zhao Qun had been and might not have felt as comfortable with the idea of a *choudan* on stage in an unconventional role.

As a *xiao huadan*, Guiside could no longer be portrayed with the wild and grotesque freedom that was afforded a *choudan* version of the character. Instead, she was bound by the conventions of a *xiao huadan*, which includes a girlish liveliness and flirtatiousness that connects her to Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang through her developed personality as a "peeping maid."<sup>168</sup> Having been designated as such, Guiside's original role as a story teller is restored. She knows everything that there is to know about Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang because of her roles as the maid and fiancée, respectively. She knows more than the others think she does because she is very good at deducing facts from the situation surrounding her, which she demonstrates at the beginning of the play in her first conversation with Zhuli Xiaojie.

GUISE.	Miss Julie.
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	It's you again? Another meal?
GUISE.	(tentatively.) I've made something new, also some warmed wine...
ZHULI XIAOJIE	No, no, no, I don't want any!
GUISE.	I know you sometimes...like to drink a little...
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	(surprised) You! Tell me how you know that!
GUISE.	Missy, I just know... <sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Sun "Interview" October 2015.

<sup>168</sup> Sun "Interview" October 2015.

<sup>169</sup> Sun "*Zhuli Xiaojie*" 234.

Kristin in the original Strindberg play is a minor character and is only sketched out.<sup>170</sup> Her main quality is, as Strindberg writes in the play's preface, that she is a female slave.

Standing over the stove all day has made her subservient and dull; like an animal her hypocrisy is unconscious and she overflows with morality and religion, which serve as cloaks and scapegoats for her sins whereas a strong character would have no need of them because he could bear his guilt himself or explain it away.<sup>171</sup>

However, in the *jingju*, in a departure from Strindberg, the 2012 creative team takes away her religious devotion. Instead, Guiside is left with a social and moral compass. She scolds Zhuli Xiaojie for being "way out of line today, carousing with crowds of men. Men and women are told to keep their distance, especially for somebody in her position. Isn't it a disgrace? It disgusts even me to see her behave so badly."<sup>172</sup> While she does not have a perfect moral compass, she, as a *xiao huadan* and as the maid, is conventionally expected to make comments about and perhaps even pass judgement on other characters.

Physically, the *xiao huadan* and the *choudan* versions of the character are, understandably, quite different. As a *xiao huadan*, the actor is bound by the conventions governing each sub-category of *dan* character. *Xiao huadan*, as opposed to *qingyi*, make larger and broader movements, but they still operate within a certain scope/sphere (幅度 *fudu*) of movement. They are active characters, but because they are also *dan* characters, their active movements must be performed with a certain amount of restraint. She still carries her point and her anger at the two of them, but it is performed in a way that is within the proper sphere of *dan* characters: with grace and control.

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<sup>170</sup> Strindberg "Preface" 63.

<sup>171</sup> Strindberg "Preface" 63.

<sup>172</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 237.



### Dance-Acting

Dance-acting (做 *zuo*) is one for the Four Main Skills of *jingju* and “is all of the visible results of acting in the Western sense, including facial expression and movement, as well as choreographed and pantomimic movement, and pure dance.”<sup>173</sup> Dance-acting is used to express emotion, aspects of personality of each role category, and expressively convey content, especially in situations when using Song or Speech is not adequate.

Of the Four Main Skills, movement is one that can more easily absorb foreign elements while still holding with the *jingju* conventions and remaining familiar to Chinese audiences. The guiding criteria for Movement are, how well does the Movement tell the story and express the personality of the characters and their emotions at each specific moment. Within *Zhuli Xiaojie*, and in all of the case studies in this dissertation, the audience receives many hints about the characters from the way they move and how they physically behave around other characters.

In the following section, I examine several scenes that were either added to the 2012 version of *Zhuli Xiaojie* as a way of fleshing out the 2010 production. These scenes are not in Strindberg’s original play, however, they served to bring the play more solidly into China. The Movements in these scenes are, for the most part, *jingju*. However, foreign elements and Chinese folk elements are also included, with the intention of helping audiences relate to the characters easily, by providing visual information about the characters’ origins and personalities.

### Added Scenes

#### “The Festival”

The country festival that sparks the drama of *Zhuli Xiaojie* is never seen on stage. Audiences, instead, rely on descriptions and a short dance sequence from the actors. This is

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<sup>173</sup> Wichmann-Walczak “Interview” April 2018.

different from Strindberg's original play, in which a ballet sequence is used to bring the festival onstage; the inclusion of ballet in a drama production was not unusual for the time period. In the *jingju* version, however, the creative team relied on the actor's Speech Skill to paint a picture of what is happening at the festival. As the main storyteller, the task of describing the festival fell to Guiside. In describing the festival, Guiside uses her movements in such a way that it reveals much about herself and her background.

Using her position as Zhuli Xiaojie's maid and the main storyteller, Sun and Zhao have Guiside provide the exposition. She enters the stage holding a tray of uneaten food, a device to tempt Miss Julie to tell her what has happened, thus also informing the audience.

GUISIDE.	Missy! Before Master set out for town, he particularly instructed me to feed you well.
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	I don't feel like eating.
GUISIDE.	Why don't you feel like it?
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	Not hungry
GUISIDE.	How could you be not hungry? You have not eaten anything since...
ZHULI XIAOJIE	( <i>enters</i> ). How do you know I have eaten or not?
GUISIDE.	Missy, all of your meals are prepared by me. <sup>174</sup>

Zhuli Xiaojie and Guiside share a scene about what has happened between Zhuli Xiaojie and her fiancé, a scene that is originally between Guiside and Xiang Qiang. However, because of Guiside's position as the maid, Sun has established a level of trust between the two characters that is more conventional in *jingju* between a mistress and her maid. Not only does this closeness establish a level of trust, but it also sets the emotional stakes for the rest of the play.

The scene continues with Guiside bringing Julie another tray of food, this time with some wine because Guiside knows that Zhuli Xiaojie "like[s] to drink a little,"<sup>175</sup> because, as the maid,

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<sup>174</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 231.

<sup>175</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 233.

Guiside knows everything about Zhuli Xiaojie, even the secrets. Before she can drink the wine, however, the lion dances for a festival in the courtyard and Kristin sees Jean.

GUISE.                    My man Jean is an expert lion dancer.  
ZHULI XIAOJIE.        You have your own man?  
GUISE.                    Well, I call him "my man" because all is done except a  
                                 wedding. Master says after the New Year...<sup>176</sup>

Guiside points Xiang Qiang out to Zhuli Xiaojie, reveals their relationships, and describes his skills as a lion dancer. Zhuli Xiaojie drinks the wine Guiside has brought and leaves to join the dancers. As Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang dance, Guiside's role as a commentator and observer takes center stage as she describes the dancing. Looking out the window in front of her, Guiside speaks in *shuban*, a "light hearted verse to a strict rhythm that is tapped out by the orchestral leader on *ban*, or clappers"<sup>177</sup> that is often used in *jingju* and reserved primarily for the *chou* role category.

Through the solo, Guiside admires Xiang Qiang's skills as a dancer while also having an imaginary dialogue with Jean and Miss Julie, urging them to be careful around each other.

GUISE.                    (*half spoken half sung*)  
                                 The lion is dancing better than a dragon flying.  
                                 Leaping up the hill and then rushing down,  
                                 The lion roars when teased by the tamer.  
                                 He springs forward and then jumps back,  
                                 Dashing to the west and swing to the east.  
                                 The Crowd cheers bravo.  
                                 My man Jean is the hero!  
                                 Missy, go easy as you weigh in.  
                                 It's my man under the lion skin!  
                                 We two have yet to properly wed,  
                                 But he's already the master of my bed.  
                                 Don't fool around a beast without heed,  
                                 An aroused lion will make you bleed!  
                                 (*Speaks*) Miss Julie must have drunk too much. She can't even  
                                 steady herself. (*To Jean offstage*) Jean! That's quite enough. Let

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<sup>176</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 234.

<sup>177</sup> Thorpe "Only Joking" 276.

Miss Julie take a rest! Gossip will start if you carry on too long. I'll be in the kitchen getting your dinner ready. When the watchman strikes one, you must be back. Can you remember that?<sup>178</sup>

The Festival Scene was added to the adaptation for a variety of reasons. First, to give Guiside more stage time. Sun does follow Strindberg's lead and uses Guiside to give the exposition to the audience in a direct address. However, she is no longer the abstract character that Strindberg intended her to be, but is now a complete person with a personality, founded in but going beyond her role as the maid. As a more rounded character, Guiside, through her Speech and Dance-Acting skills, lets the audience into her relationships with Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang, which also drives the rest of the play.

Strindberg believed that words, along with blocking, would “reveal the mental states of the speaker and recipient in the underlying power struggle.”<sup>179</sup> In *jingju*, music and arias portray that power dynamic because it reveals what is truly in the character's heart. Paired with more active movements, reminiscent of Chinese folk dance, Guiside's solo provides a good atmosphere for describing a peasant festival that the audience is unable to see. At the tail end of the Festival, the audience finally gets to meet Xiang Qiang, as he dances with the lion that was the festival's main attraction, showing off Xiang Qiang 's agility as a dancer and his virility as a man. As Xiang Qiang enters after the festival, he holds the lion's head in one hand, with the fabric body is draped over the opposite arm (Fig 11). Manipulating the lion's body, Xiang Qiang demonstrates his skill at lion dancing, a popular form of entertainment at festivals and weddings. The manipulation of the lion's body and the combination with the festive atmosphere,

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<sup>178</sup> Sun “*Zhuli Xiaojie*” 235-236.

<sup>179</sup> Stockenström 43-44

lends a sense of virility that Xiang Qiang capitalizes on when he seduces Zhuli Xiaojie later in the play.



Fig 11. Yan Qinggu as Xiang Qiang in *Zhuli Xiaojie*, 2012.

### “The Love Triangle”

The creation of the love triangle that develops between the three characters is shown through both music and blocking conventions. In order to illustrate the love triangle, the creative team utilized blocking to create a triangle on stage, very reminiscent of and therefore perhaps based on “Scene 4: Battle of Wits (*zhi dou*)” from the model contemporary revolutionary play *Shajiabang*, although in its original form the three characters analyzed and attempted to manipulate one another for social and political reasons. Rotating through this triangle, the actor at the apex would sing a monologue while the other two characters interact with each other, creating in *Zhuli Xiaojie* the image of a love triangle, both physically and vocally.

ZHULI XIAOJIE.	Cook, shut your mouth! <i>to Jean</i> . Come and drink!
XIANG QIANG.	( <i>sings aside</i> .) Miss Julie is really out of her mind.
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	( <i>sings aside</i> .) The ungrateful brute is one of a kind.
GUI SIDE.	( <i>sings aside</i> .) Does she have the hots for the rascal?
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	( <i>sings aside</i> .) I have an appetite for the untamed.
	( <i>she speaks</i> .) In fashionable circles, a gentleman should drink with a lady.
XIANG QIANG.	( <i>sings aside</i> .) Is she messing with me?
	Or is she coming on to me?
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	( <i>sings aside</i> .) Rich men are idle and useless,
	Much too refined and too soft.
	You're a fun-loving strong farm boy,
	Why not show me some life and joy?
GUI SIDE.	( <i>sings aside</i> .) The liquor has gone to her head,

She is playing with my man like a toy.  
ZHULI XIAOJIE. Cook, go and fetch some classy liquor...Go!<sup>180</sup>

This three-part monologue moves at a relatively brisk pace, as evidenced by the fact that they alternately sing only one line each at a time, in *xipi erliuban*, or two-six-meter, which conveys emotion fairly straight forwardly, but with a sense of excitement and anticipation, reflecting the urgency of the situation.<sup>181</sup> As each character sings his or her lines, they move from the back to the point of the triangle while the other two characters either remain in the back or move from the front point to one of the back points, literally forming a triangle. Through this piece of staging, the audience is able to understand the relationships between the three characters and their inner most thoughts and feelings. As also evidenced by the lyrics that they sing, each character has a certain objective that they are trying to achieve: Zhuli Xiaojie is flirting with Xiang Qiang and trying to get him to drink; Xiang Qiang is flattered by Zhuli Xiaojie's attentions and questions her actual intentions; Guiside is disapproving and scared by what is happening, which is highlighted in her lyrics. The scene ends when Guiside is forced to leave because Zhuli Xiaojie has ordered her to get some more liquor. As the maid, she has to follow Zhuli Xiaojie's orders, but she is unwilling to leave and begs Jean to come with her. He refuses to do so, instead telling her to leave as well, which surprises her. As a result, Guiside's fear is amped up even more.

### "Sleeping Together"

In the traditions of both *xiqu* and the Western theatre of Strindberg's time, the act of sleeping together is very rarely seen on stage, even though touching in *xiqu* has become more acceptable in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. *Zhuli Xiaojie* shows this evolution of the times in its

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<sup>180</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiojie" 238.

<sup>181</sup> Wichmann "Listening" 65.

depiction of Xiang Qiang and Zhuli Xiaojie sleeping together. Using the convention of intimate movement sequences with water sleeves, the creative team created a dance between the two characters that takes place in low light with a red highlight. Xiang Qiang dances with the lion puppet, again showing his virility, while Zhuli Xiaojie dances with a red rosette from which hang two long pieces of red silk that she was giving during the festival (Fig 12).



Fig 12: Flirtation scene from *Zhuli Xiaojie*

In the script, the dance is described as "turns from contentious to flirtatious."<sup>182</sup> Set to vigorous, almost combat-like, music, Julie uses the rosette as a lure to draw Xiang Qiang's lion puppet in. Once the lion is caught, the dance becomes more flirtatious, with Xiang Qiang reaching for Zhuli Xiaojie's hip, at which point they turn and Xiang Qiang's arm is around her waist. In this last half of the dance, Xiang Qiang and Zhuli Xiaojie have become the lion and the rosette, respectively. Jean catches the silk tails of the rosette with his own hands and draws Julie into him and begins to lean in for a kiss before they are interrupted by the festival and Xiang Qiang quickly pulls her off stage.

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<sup>182</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 240.

The choreography in this sequence shows Xiang Qiang and Zhuli Xiaojie engaging in a form of love play before actually sleeping together. The sequence in *Zhuli Xiaojie* is reminiscent of the meeting between a young scholar, a *xiaosheng*, and Du Liniang, *guimendan*, in the *kunqu*, *The Peony Pavilion*. Meeting in the garden for the first time, these two characters instantly fall in love during Liniang's day dream and they perform an erotic movement sequence with their water sleeves. The scene ends with the scholar putting his arm around her shoulders and Liniang looking away, hiding her face with other water sleeve. The sequence in *Zhuli Xiaojie* demonstrates the current attitude about showing sex and intimacy on stage in the 21st century, which has not changed since Tang Xianzu (1550-1616) wrote *The Peony Pavilion*. The similarities between Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang and the Scholar and Du Liniang, shows the creative team honoring past performances, while creating their own version to suit the story.

"Kiss My Sock"

Sun chose to place the famous "Kiss My Boot" scene right before Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang sleep together. This scene is one of the most important scenes in Strindberg's original and, as Sun found in his directing seminar at NACTA, is not easily read with its original intent by Chinese audiences. In Western culture, kissing a boot is disgusting and humiliating for the kisser. In Chinese culture, however, kissing a foot is erotic and does not feed into the same gender debate narrative that the original scene does. However, what the *jingju* version does show are the extraordinary behaviors that are caused by the festival and alcohol, leading both Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang to actions in which they would otherwise probably not engage in.

Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang have both been drinking and their status barriers, which had been so important before this scene, are now crumbling away. This is where Zhuli Xiaojie is allowed, whether consciously or not, to show her true nature, and the battle between the genders



through words begins with a debate about cleaning Zhuli Xiaojie's shoes (Fig 13). At the same time, Zhuli Xiaojie orders Xiang Qiang to kiss her foot as reward for having cleaned her boots, demonstrating the chemistry between the two characters and as a lead in to Miss Julie and Jean sleeping together.

XIANG QIANG. Kiss your sock?! (*Walks away and sings*)  
When I was just a little kid,  
I used to play near the estate.  
Retrieving a ball under the wall one day,  
A fairy princess took my breath away.  
A vision of such exquisite beauty,  
To kiss her feet would make me happy.  
Déjà vu, but the princess is all grown up.  
Her white socks are now embroidered.  
I've traveled far and wide,  
Experiencing life from every side.  
What childish dreams, I bid you adieu.  
(*Speaks.*) I'll go clean Master's boots.<sup>183</sup>

What follows this speech is the more intense and sexually charged dance sequence that foreshadows what they are about to do.

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<sup>183</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 239.



Fig 13. "Kiss my sock" from  
*Zhuli Xiaojie*

ZHULI XIAOJIE. Hold on! Put on your lion head! I'd like to handle a lion now!

XIANG QIANG. Happy to oblige, but aren't you afraid of people's snickering if they see you dance so late at night?

ZHULI XIAOJIE. I'm not afraid. Who dares to snicker?

XIANG QIANG. Kristin would go mad if she...!

ZHULI XIAOJIE. Why should I care? Does she think I'll take her away from some dirt bag like you? Put it on!

XIANG QIANG. As you wish. *(They go out and engage in a lion dance that turns from contentious to flirtatious. When JEAN's mouth moves towards JULIE's face, noises from the villagers are heard. They quickly separate themselves from each other)*

XIANG QIANG. Damn it! Come with me, Miss Julie...*They circle the stage*

ZHULI XIAOJIE. What's this place?

XIANG QIANG. My bedroom.

ZHULI XIAOJIE. Yuck, it's filthy!

XIANG QIANG. Don't mind the mess. It's your face we try to save. Come on! *(They exit.)*<sup>184</sup>

<sup>184</sup>Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 240.

The *huashan* in Zhuli Xiaojie takes true form in this scene. She is not afraid to demand whatever she wants, even if it is socially unacceptable. In order to flirt with a man who is below her station, Zhuli Xiaojie is willing to do whatever it takes to seduce him, while also not being completely aware of the consequences that follow her behavior.

“After Sleeping Together”

Zhuli Xiaojie emerges from having slept with Xiang Qiang distressed. Singing in a *manban*, or slow meter, which is sung in “relatively peaceful, introspective situations”<sup>185</sup> In this case, Zhuli Xiaojie is more introspective than peaceful as she contemplates her present circumstances and potential loss of reputation. When she finishes her aria, Zhuli Xiaojie sits at the table upstage, while Xiang Qiang enters, wearing a tunic top and loose pants. He waves a fan at himself while he saunters out, feeling the pride of having slept with Zhuli Xiaojie. Using *shuban*, Xiang Qiang gloats about his achievement.

The rest of the scene relies on Speech and Singing Skills as both characters explain their feelings and trade insults. Xiang Qiang tells her that she “once [was] the treasured heir, but not anymore!”<sup>186</sup> He then tries to convince her that “once my dream is realized, all the gossip will subside,”<sup>187</sup> displaying a rather simple attitude and naiveté concerning the differences between nobles and peasants, which Zhuli Xiaojie promptly points out by telling him that “you underlings know no shame, we nobles care about our name.”<sup>188</sup> When she refuses to leave with him, thus taking away all of his financial backing, gender is brought into the conversation.

XIANG QIANG.	(sings) Should you bid me good-bye, I'll have to pay you for the night.
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	(sings) How could I put my body for sale?

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<sup>185</sup> Wichmann, *Listening*, 65

<sup>186</sup> Sun “Zhuli Xiaojie” 242.

<sup>187</sup> Sun “Zhuli Xiaojie” 242.

<sup>188</sup> Sun “Zhuli Xiaojie” 242.

XIANG QIANG.	My ancestors were noble. (sings) If you refuse to sail with me, You've turned this into a brothel.
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	(sings) How dare you insult me like that? You filthy beast, you're mad!

As in the original play, class differences are never completely gone, but when gender is brought in, the argument becomes more personal and dangerous. In their urgency, Zhuli Xiaojie and Xiang Qiang sing a joint aria in *kuaiban*, or fast meter, which Wichmann describes has “having a lot to say really fast.”<sup>189</sup> In short lines, as seen in their aria quoted above, both characters singing in *kuaiban*, amplifies their anger, which drives them to start insulting their genders and classes, making reference to Strindberg’s gender and class debates.

“Pretending to be the Master”

Xiang Qiang, feeling confident that he has successfully both gotten the money he needs from Zhuli Xiaojie and convinced Guiside that it is he and Guiside who will be leaving, dreams of the time when he will be a Master. He indulges himself by putting on the Master's tall black boots with thick white soles, typical of the *laosheng* and *xiaosheng* and *hualian* role categories, then finishes the look with the Master's robe. After he finishes putting on the clothes, Xiang Qiang performs a short *shuban* speech as he moves around the stage, demonstrating an inherent confidence that comes from the clothes that he is wearing, and exhibits the physicality of a *laosheng*.

“The Master Returns”

Xiang Qiang’s confidence is quickly swept aside when the Master returns home. Xiang Qiang speaks to an invisible Master, who has returned, right after he has accused Zhuli Xiaojie of being a prostitute. All of a sudden, his superiority, false or otherwise, is now gone because he

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<sup>189</sup> Wichmann, *Listening*, 62

has regressed back to his original status and is unable to claim the superiority that he had tried to claim over Miss Julie.

Physically, Xiang Qiang has lost all of the confidence that he gained while wearing his Master's clothes. He no longer moves at a slow pace, but instead runs in circles while alternately rubbing hands together to show panic. He shrinks from his upright posture to a lower posture, more appropriate for a *chou* character. Groveling to an invisible Master, Xiang Qiang realizes that he is still wearing his clothes. He whips the robe off, falls to the floor to take the boots off, and runs off stage. The confident Jean has completely disappeared and the servant Jean is back, clearly showing that it is very difficult to move up from a peasant status.

### Deaths

#### The Skylark

Zhuli Xiaojie 's pet bird plays an integral part in the play. Not only does the bird represent Miss Julie's desire to be free, but it is also the only thing that Miss Julie truly loves. In Strindberg's original, the bird is only represented by an empty cage, and the audience is supposed to understand that there is a bird in that cage because Zhuli Xiaojie frequently mentions her precious bird.

In *Zhuli Xiaojie*, the bird is represented by two items frequently used in *jingju* traditional performance: the fan, a stage property, and the *dizi*, a bamboo flute that is used in the orchestra to accompany *kunqu*-based song and to represent a variety of objects with sound. The bird “appears” via a tune played on the *dizi*, which is reminiscent of a bird's song. At the same time, the actor playing Zhuli Xiaojie uses her eyes to suggest by presence of the bird by looking up in the air. She then reaches out her fan as a perch for the imaginary bird, thus solidifying the illusion that there is a bird on stage.

The bird's death comes when Xiang Qiang and Zhuli Xiaojie are making preparations to leave. Zhuli Xiaojie plans to bring her pet bird with them, but Xiang Qiang is fearful that the bird will make too much noise and give them away, and also feels that it is too frivolous. The moment of the bird's death is the climax of the final scene between Xiang Qiang and Zhuli Xiaojie, which concerns the preparations for their travels.

XIANG QIANG.	Really! What's this?
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	My beloved bird. I can't go anywhere without her.
XIANG QIANG.	Are you bringing it with you?
JULIE.	Why not?
XIANG QIANG.	No way! ( <i>Sings</i> )
	What to do with such a Precious?
	Her dumbness is too ridiculous!
	What about money and treasure?
	Go get them for our adventure!
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	Money and treasure?
XIANG QIANG.	Yes! Gold, silver, and precious gems! They're seeds to grow our fortunes!
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	Well fed and clothed, I don't ever handle money. Dad's lucky silvers are kept with my jewelry. What's the use of gold and treasure? Can't we open an inn without them?
XIANG QIANG.	What! What are you saying?!
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	Besides, they're all locked up in Dad's room. How could I get them?
XIANG QIANG.	You, you...How could you get them?! Hahahaha!
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	Don't laugh. I'm scared! Tell me what to do. I really don't know what to do.
XIANG QIANG.	What to do? Haha! You don't know what to do? Let me tell you. Let me show you!
	<i>(He grabs the bird and wrings off her head before throwing it on the ground)</i>
ZHULI XIAOJIE.	<i>(sings.)</i> The cruel man is evil incarnate My dear skylark is decapitated! <sup>190</sup>

As Xiang Qiang grabs the bird away from Zhuli Xiaojie, they struggle over the fan and the *dizi* plays a frantic song, which stops as soon as Xiang Qiang "breaks" the fan in half, signifying the bird's death. The choreography of this particular sequence is beautifully frantic, expressing

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<sup>190</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 244-245.

Xiang Qiang's annoyance and anger that Zhuli Xiaojie has not done what he has told her to do. In contrast, Julie's movements are slightly calmer, partly to continue the illusion of the bird on the perch, but also because she does not understand why Xiang Qiang is so angry. The struggle over the bird and its death is the culmination of their emotions and marks the transformation of Zhuli Xiaojie from a *huashan* to a *qingyi*.

### Zhuli Xiaojie's Death

Strindberg wrote Miss Julie's death as implied. She takes the razor that Jean has left on table and exits the stage, leaving the audience to assume that she has committed suicide. She is now woken up from the trance she has been under for the second half of the play, but she cannot go back to where she was at the beginning of the play. The ending Strindberg wrote demonstrates an anti-feminist sentiment: that Miss Julie must die because her inadequate hereditary makes it so that she is easy to influence and bring down.

The *jingju* version of Zhuli Xiaojie's death is emotional and very characteristic of *jingju*. However, because Strindberg's scientific messages did not get translated as well, Zhuli Xiaojie's death becomes more about her loss of morals and her fall down the Confucian Ethics Ladder. She has to save face and the best way to do that, is to die.

Her exit is quiet, it is proud, and she does it on her own terms. The *jingju* version of Zhuli Xiaojie's death is more outwardly emotional than Strindberg's original and very characteristic of *jingju*. A major part of Zhuli Xiaojie's character is her desire to be free, different from the status quo, and to show her personality. In order to express this character at this point in the play, the creative team chose to write an aria in which Zhuli Xiaojie not only sings to her pet skylark, but also envies its ability to fly when and where ever it wants.

ZHULI XIAOJIE.     (*daoban*) Sweet bird sings with a loving song,  
Caressing me into a calming dance.

(*huilong*) While a bird can understand a human,  
 Why can't a man understand a woman!  
 Schooled in new thoughts and new books,  
 I can't stand pedantic men of stodgy ideas.  
 Tradition called for an arranged marriage,  
 Father tried hard to get me a bejeweled cage.  
 What girl doesn't dream of prince charming?  
 But the rich beau turned out a wimpy nothing!  
 Unhappily-engaged for more than half a year,  
 I kept pushing the wedding from coming near.  
 When he came again to court disdain today,  
 I broke the engagement and sent him away!  
 Rejecting the man doesn't set me free.  
 I await Father's wrath to unleash on me.  
 I envy you Skylark of your wings.  
 Fly me away, but no where to go.  
 Sky is the limit, yet delicate wings  
 Can't take us beyond these walls.<sup>191</sup>

This aria gives several insights into Zhuli Xiaojie's personality. For one, it shows the audience that she is able to think for herself and is unwilling to settle for the man who her father has chosen for her husband. The aria thereby also shows her education and her ability to take action about her unhappiness. Secondly, the aria incorporates the imagery of Zhuli Xiaojie's pet skylark, whom she envies because it can fly when and where ever it wants without any problems, thus letting the audience know that Zhuli Xiaojie is of independent mind, but is locked behind the walls that society has built up around her. The Singing Skill and Dance-Acting Skill allows the audience to become emotionally invested in Zhuli Xiaojie's death. In order to adequately analyze the movements in this section, I have split Zhuli Xiaojie's final aria into three main sections.

The first section is sung in *daoban*, or lead-in meter, followed by *huilong*, or undulating dragon meter,<sup>192</sup> *Daoban* is a free-meter, meaning that it is free of any rhythmic regulations; it is

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<sup>191</sup> Sun "Zhuli Xiaojie" 233.

<sup>192</sup> Wichmann "Listening" 68.



only used for the first line of an aria, while *huilong* is a metered type that is associated with free-meter, but takes the meter of the sung metered line that follows it. The combination of *daoban* and *huilong* signifies sudden grief and other intense and unexpected emotions.<sup>193</sup> Writing the beginning of the aria in these two metrical types follows Zhuli Xiaojie's grief over the death of her Skylark. The tragedy of the moment and poignancy of Zhuli Xiaojie's feelings of despair, and yet the small glimmer of joy that she gets to follow the skylark in its flight away from the boundaries and restrictions of society. Now, she gets to be free and alone, even if it requires her to die.

ZHULI XIAOJIE.     *(sings xipi erliuban.)* Outside the day is dawning,  
                                   Inside my heart is drowning  
                                   Skylark, oh, skylark,  
                                   Your singsong days are cut short,  
                                   I'm left behind utterly bereft,  
                                   Julie, oh, Julie.<sup>194</sup>

Zhuli Xiaojie expresses her anger turned to sadness at her pet's death and her sudden social downfall through heightened emotional singing, the main skill of a *qingyi*. As she sings to her dead bird, Julie sits on the ground, her body hunched over in sadness. She makes very few movements: rising from a sitting position to a kneeling position and sweeping her right water sleeve over her left arm. The small and subtle movements of this section allow the audience to concentrate on the actor's talent at singing, as well as become invested in the emotion of Skylark's death and Zhuli Xiaojie's grief.

The quoted second section above is sung in *xipi erliuban*, and is, therefore, more vigorous. This particular metrical structure is generally slower for female characters, as opposed to male. It is usually sung in situations that are “fairly straightforward but nonetheless have a

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<sup>193</sup> Wichmann “*Listening*” 68.

<sup>194</sup> Sun “*Zhuli Xiaojie*” 246

sense of excitement or anticipation about them.”<sup>195</sup> Moving from the first section where Zhuli Xiaojie mourns the death of her beloved bird, Zhuli Xiaojie begins to feel anger and grief, which she channels at herself, not just because of her actions the night before, but also because she has allowed them to lead to a sense of despair and hopelessness, when in fact she has the power to end it all.

ZHULI XIAOJIE.     *(Sings)* How can you bear such cowardice?  
How can you bear such despair?  
How can you bear such melancholy?  
How can you bear such absurdity?  
Night is over but there is no light,  
I'm following Skylark in her flight...<sup>196</sup>

At the beginning of this section, Zhuli Xiaojie moves from her kneeling position and stands, creating an image of a more determined Zhuli Xiaojie. Her hand gestures, and by extension, her water sleeves, which had been so small and subtle in the first section have become more active, especially in the lines where she questions what she can bear.

The aria is followed by Zhuli Xiaojie's death and the wedding of Xiang Qiang and Guiside. As Zhuli Xiaojie finishes singing, the sounds of a wedding start to build. Zhuli Xiaojie slowly turns upstage and is plunged into darkness with her hands raised towards the lit picture of the Skylark on the backdrop. In dim lighting, Xiang Qiang and Guiside enter the stage in wedding clothes with a red cloth. They bow to each other, as is customary in traditional Chinese weddings. They then swing the red cloth in the air as Julie crosses underneath it, and then let the cloth drop to the stage. At the last percussion beat, Zhuli Xiaojie drops to the ground and her death scene is complete.

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<sup>195</sup> Wichmann *"Listening"* 64-65

<sup>196</sup> Wichmann *"Listening"* 64-65

### **Costumes and Makeup**

Along with physicality, costumes and make up also give audiences clues about the personality of each character. Colors are especially important to giving hints into a character's innermost thoughts and desires, along with their age and maturity levels.<sup>197</sup> Costumes and makeup in *Zhuli Xiaojie*, for the most part, remained traditional: skirts for the *qingyi*, pants for the *choudan*, *xiaohuadan*, and the *sheng*.

#### **Zhuli Xiaojie**

Between the 2010 and 2012 productures, the costumes for Zhuli Xiaojie changed. In 2010, Zhuli Xiaojie's costumes were borrowed and similar to a variety of other famous *huashan* characters, such as Yu Ji from *Farewell My Concubine*. However, in 2012, the costumes changed radically, perhaps to solidify *Zhuli Xiaojie* as an independent performance that did not need to rely on already established costume conventions. Another reason could be because the two costumes that were used in 2010 were very appropriate for *wudan* characters, but not for *wendan* characters, a misappropriation which would be clear for most Chinese audiences. As a result, the costumes for Zhuli Xiaojie in the 2012 production adapted a more ancient Chinese look, from long flowing skirts and a fitted bodice.

She mostly stays within the pastel palate, which emphasizes her youthful age and her lower level of maturity. When Zhuli Xiaojie starts the play, she is an idealist. She is strong in her conviction that her status is everything and that she will be safe no matter what happens during the night of the festival. However, this conviction is swayed when she appears on stage in a partially red dress after having slept with Jean. Red is a good luck color in Chinese tradition, usually used for happy occasions, such as weddings. The ombre, or fading, dyework on her dress

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<sup>197</sup> Bonds 32.

from red to pink on her dress shows that her happiness has faded after she has slept with Xiang Qiang, pointing to her disillusionment and her confusion over her possible loss of stature and class.

### Xiang Qiang

Jean's costume is fairly traditional for a *wusheng*: a dark blue pair of pants, vest, and a soft hat. Everything is tucked in and neat, making it easier for him to move during his lion dance. He wears variations of the same costume throughout the play, either taking layers off or adding layers. For instance, after he and Miss Julie sleep together, he enters wearing a plain white tunic and light blue silk pants, which are often used as the base layer of *jingju* costuming. For the rest of the production, he keeps this base layer, but adds pieces of the Master's clothing, including his boots and a sleeveless cloak, as he pretends to be a master. Jean's makeup is of a *xiaosheng*, with peach makeup for the base, light pink around the eyes, and a *tongtianpiao*, a light red spear shaped mark down the forehead to emphasize virility.

### Guiside

Kirstin's costume drastically changed from 2010 to 2012. In 2010 as a *choudan*, Kristin is dressed in a loose pink tunic and pants with a blue sleeveless knee-length vest layered over the top, all tied together around the waist with a white and blue sash. Her hair is built up into a bun that leans to one side and is decorated with the traditional hair jewels that are also leaning off to the side. In the 2012 production, Kristin first wears a green costume that is traditionally representative of a *huadan*: fitted tunic and pants. However, these pants have a very wide leg that stays open at the bottom as opposed to the more traditional *huadan* costume that is held close to the leg by elastic at the bottom. She then changes into a purple version of the same costume for

her wedding with Jean. Her hair is put up in a wide bun and decorated with a long band of flowers, with two thin braids hanging down her sides.

These two costumes are representative of their respective role categories, while also embodying the *jingju* aesthetic of *mei*. As *choudan*, the 2010 Kristin, according to Xiao Jian was meant to be grotesque in physicality and appearance.<sup>198</sup> Creating a costume for this character that depicted a woman who thinks she is beautiful, but is in fact not fully put together, offered a fairly wide range of possibilities for the creative team. In contrast, the 2012 Kristin, as a *huadan*, is much more put together and presentable, and very clearly a *huadan* based firmly in tradition. (Figs 14 and 15).

Fig. 14 *Choudan* Guiside

Fig 15: *Huadan* Guiside



### International Productions

*Zhuli Xiaojie* was performed in Shanghai in 2010 and 2012. Subsequently, it was taken abroad to six countries in 2012: Korea, England, Iran, Italy, Ireland, and Sweden; in Sweden, it was presented in celebration of the anniversary of Strindberg's death. When asked about how the Swedish people and the Strindberg estate responded to the production, Sun said that the reactions

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<sup>198</sup> Xiao "Interview" April 2016

were generally positive, although there was some confusion about the term “opera,” which led audiences to expect a Western operatic performance as opposed to *jingju*.<sup>199</sup>

The performance in Tehran, Iran, however, required changes in costuming because of differences in what was culturally appropriate—most specifically, this meant covering the heads of the female characters. For Zhuli Xiaojie, this was not a big problem. Liu Lu, the actor who played Zhuli Xiaojie on this tour, told me in an interview that she wore a *hijab* in order to comply with Muslim culture, but still inserted the jewels into the *hijab* to be in keeping with the *jingju* tradition.<sup>200</sup>

Guicide, however, proved to be more of a challenge. Because at this point Guicide was a *choudan*, the Creative team's original thought was that he would not have to wear a *hijab*. However, since the character Guicide is female, the organizers decided that it would be better if the *hijab* were worn, because the Iranian audience might have been confused to see a female character on stage without one. So, like Zhuli Xiaojie, Guicide wore a *hijab* with the jewels inserted into the wrap.<sup>201</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Within the framework of Marvin Carlson's Seven Intercultural Relationships, both productions rank at Relationship Two, where “foreign elements are assimilated into tradition and absorbed by it”<sup>202</sup> and a stage three, where “entire foreign structures are assimilated into tradition instead of isolated elements.”<sup>203</sup> My decision to place both productions between stages two and three is because the original Strindberg play, as the foreign element, has been completely absorbed

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<sup>199</sup> Sun “Interview”, 2015; Lu “Interview”, 2015.

<sup>200</sup> Lu “Interview” 2015.

<sup>201</sup> Sun “Interview”, 2015.

<sup>202</sup> Carlson 82

<sup>203</sup> Carlson, 83

into the *jingju* structure. Whatever shocking elements there were came from taking advantage of *jingju* convention, for instance, Zhao took advantage of the *jingju* Role Categories and cast a *choudan* in a major role, which is unusual and would probably be surprising to Chinese audiences and interesting to non-Chinese audiences. The 2012 production, however, returned to the original parameters of the Four Main Role Categories, but changed elements, such as costumes, that are not as surprising, but does help to place the production more solidly in Chinese culture.

However, included in the negotiations and dynamics of the adaptation process was the fact that the creative teams were adapting a Western play under the guidance of two playwrights who had been trained in the United States. What resulted was an example of Carlson's second and third stages. *Zhuli Xiaojie*, as a whole, was a true *jingju* performance and not meant to be challenging for *jingju* audiences in China to understand. There was nothing obviously foreign about the performance, or anything shocking about the foreign elements that were included in the production. However, Zhao Qun's use of the *choudan* to represent Guiside had a strong Western implication of being grotesque and odd. Her choice of a *choudan* is interesting when placed within Carlson's Intercultural relationships because the use of the adjective "grotesque" carries several meanings, meaning that the character would be revolting, or strange, or odd. However, I argue that *choudan* are common enough in *jingju* that in its context, they are not odd, or strange, or revolting, but rather amusing. The use of the adjective "grotesque" in reference to the *choudan* Guiside falls within relationships 2 and 3, where "2) Foreign elements are assimilated into the tradition and absorbed by it," and "3) Entire foreign structures are assimilated into the tradition instead of isolated elements."<sup>204</sup> The element in this case is not the physical character. It is the description. The fact that it was used in my interviews and readings three times, and by both

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<sup>204</sup> Carlson 82-83

Zhao and Sun, tells me that they were both influenced by a very Western, and older, way of thinking about *jingju*, one that is not necessarily appropriate because it is imposing an extra-*jingju* way of thinking on a *jingju* characterization.

The Intercultural Relationships can also be seen in the dynamics between the two different productions, their directors, and in their domestic and international significance. The 2010 Creative took a risk with the *choudan*, but they did not take other risks with other elements, such as costumes and makeup, music, etc. Because this production toured to multiple countries, and was intended to show those international audiences, as well as audiences back in China, that *jingju*, even with experimental elements, can still be seen as a *jingju* production, even when certain non-Chinese expectations are placed upon the production itself.

On the other hand, while the 2012 creative team decided to not take a risk with role categories, they did change the costumes so that *Zhuli Xiaoji* read as a more ancient story, which embedded the story in a more Chinese context, appealing to more traditional Chinese audiences. There might have been a more political angle to this change, but what this 2012 production does portray is a performance that overall was approached with more timidity than its 2010 predecessor. Although the 2012 production probably did become more appealing to traditional audiences, that is where the experimentation ended.

Both productions, no matter at which of the Seven Intercultural Relationships they are, at their very basic levels did provide audiences with new examples of what a *jingju* adaptation of a Western play can be. However, what each production did with that opportunity differed based on the position of the director at the time. Zhao took the production and, as is characteristic of MFA Directing students, decided to take full advantage of *jingju* convention and experiment with it.



However, Guo, as a more established director, decided to create a more mainstream production while experimenting with smaller, but no less significant, elements.

## CHAPTER 4: *SHENGMUYUAN* (《圣母院》 2008 *NOTRE DAME DE PARIS*), *QING SHANG ZHONGLOU* (《情殇钟楼》 2011 *DEATH IN THE BELL TOWER*)

### Introduction

This chapter on two adaptations of Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame du Paris: Shengmuyuan* (《圣母院》 *Notre Dame de Paris*) in 2008 and *Qing Shang zhonglou* (《情殇钟楼》 *Death in the Bell Tower*) in 2011. Both productions, which feature *huashan* actor Shi Yihong as Esmeralda, were produced through the Shanghai *Jingju* Company (上海京剧院, SJC). Throughout the course of my analysis, it became clear that these two versions had two goals: The first goal is to expand *jingju*'s horizons. This goal, as explained throughout this dissertation, is not new or original. However, what these productions explore is the concept of "otherness," of acting and displaying foreignness within *jingju* convention. The Creative teams on both *Shengmuyuan* and *Qing Shang zhonglou* set out to find ways to display difference, especially within the characters of Esmeralda and Quasimodo. This exploration leads seamlessly into the second goal, which was to emphasize the flexibility of Shanghai-style *jingju* (*haipai*), a style of *jingju* that is known for taking more risks and being more adventurous. With their investigation into how *jingju* can show otherness and foreignness, the creative teams brought in other forms of dance and music and incorporated them into Esmeralda's characterization, and experimented with different physicalities to create that of Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, who is not only of non-Han ethnicity, but also looks different from everyone else. His outward appearance was achieved through a combination of different role categories as well as manipulating his body in new ways in order to create the physical silhouette of a hunched back, and the appearance of a limp. The

sheer number of set pieces, props, and musical elements that were included in the production are also representative of the *haipai* style.<sup>205</sup>

Victor Hugo (1802-1882) and Notre-Dame de Paris (1831)

Victor Hugo was a prolific poet, novelist, playwright, and politician of the Romantic Era. His father was a major in the French Army who was an atheist and very loyal to Napoleon, while his mother, Sophie, was a devout Catholic and a great supporter of the monarchy.<sup>206</sup> During his childhood, Hugo had been exposed to significant figures through his father's military standing, now a general in Napoleon's Army and also through his mother's friendship with Colonel Victor de Lahorie, Chief of staff to Napoleon's main rival, General Moreau.<sup>207</sup> As an adult, Hugo, would swing between fighting for the republic and then writing papers to promote the monarchy. However, he always fought and argued for the fate of the oppressed and poor, a theme that carried through to his novels, ranging from exploring the hypocrisy and biases of the Catholic Church in *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831), especially in regards to people who are ethnically or visually different to students idealistically fighting for the common people who have been suffering under the regime of Napoleon III in *Les Miserables* (1862), influenced by the July Revolution and the death of General Lamarque on June 5, 1832, which sparked a the rebellion against the reign of Louis Phillippe.<sup>208</sup>

As a writer, Hugo was especially known for his pioneering work in Romanticism, a literary and artistic period that is characterized by an emphasis on emotion, elevated emotions, and embodying universal conflicts within one person. In literary terms, Northop Frye describes the romantic novel structure as such:

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<sup>205</sup> Shi Yihong, "Interview" 2016

<sup>206</sup> Behrent, 1.

<sup>207</sup> Robb 8.

<sup>208</sup> Behrent 2

The complete form of the romance is clearly the successful quest, and such a completed form has three main stages: the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which the hero or his foe, or both, must die; the exaltation of the hero<sup>209</sup>

*Notre-Dame de Paris* is a prime example of the Romantic literature. It is part social and political commentary on the treatment of minorities and marginalized groups by those in power, part medieval architecture lesson all mainly centered around a singular location: Notre-Dame Cathedral. Each of the major characters in *Notre-Dame de Paris* possesses extreme emotions that lead to a series of misunderstandings, or minor adventures. Esmeralda falls deeply in love with Phoebus and Frollo, obsessed with Esmeralda, stabs Phoebus in the back. Esmeralda, believing that Phoebus is dead and willing to sacrifice herself for him, confesses to his murder, not realizing that he is, in fact, not dead. From the towers, Quasimodo is able to see Esmeralda about to be executed for falsely confessing to Phoebus' murder. He saves her and claims sanctuary in the cathedral, which brings the crucial struggle to the second half of the book and into Notre-Dame itself. Not only has Notre-Dame become a place of safety for Esmeralda, one of a band of gypsies who were, and are still, often scorned, but her presence in the Cathedral is the catalyst for the group of truants to attack the cathedral, for Quasimodo to attack them because he thinks they are coming to kill Esmeralda, and for Frollo to give her an ultimatum: love him or die. Choosing death, Esmeralda is hanged and Quasimodo, out of despair and anger, throws Frollo down from the balustrade, a place of great height, which allowed people to look up and watch him fall to his death.

The Notre-Dame de Paris in Victor's Hugo's novel is not a symbol of religious fervor. Instead, it is a symbol of Paris. In Hugo's novel, the cathedral is a symbol of how Gothic

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<sup>209</sup> Frye, Northrop qtd in Wildgen 319

architecture represents “the embody[ment of] all the main ideas of a people, rather than a caste, perpetuated in stone.”<sup>210</sup> With a majority of the major events occurring within Notre-Dame itself, including the deaths of public and powerful officials, and all happening at a great height, Hugo provides his readers with the obvious image that those in power have a long way to fall when they start abusing that power. At the same time, Hugo creates an image for Notre-Dame that represents the “inevitable and recurrent cycles of human evolution – repression, by religious or secular authority, giving way to freedom as the people’s hour strikes.”<sup>211</sup> Notre-Dame is the great equalizer that provides salvation to the poor and brings justice to the powerful when needed.

Hugo’s novel is, Li notes, “a model of globalization.”<sup>212</sup> Adaptations of this novel have been spread around the world, thanks to its film, animation, and musical versions. Kathryn M. Grossman notes that Hugo’s interest in the theatricality of life shows in his work, making his novels prime material to adapt to a variety of mediums in a variety of cultures.<sup>213</sup> Even in his own lifetime, Hugo contributed to operatic versions of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, including Louise Bertin’s 1836 *La Esmeralda*, and authorized an adaptation written by his brother-in-law Paul Foucher. Both versions changed major elements of the original novel.<sup>214</sup>

What adds to this globalization is the commodification of his characters. The 1996 Disney version not only meant the marketing of toys, but it also meant the presence of the novel’s characters in the Disney Parks, including Paris Disney. Grossman notes the the presence of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in Paris Disney actually saved the park for bankruptcy.<sup>215</sup> Looking through library catalogues for resources for this dissertation, I have also come across multiple

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<sup>210</sup> Krailsheimer “Introduction” xv

<sup>211</sup> Krailsheimer “Introduction” xxiv.

<sup>212</sup> R. Li “The Market” 143.

<sup>213</sup> Grossman 485

<sup>214</sup> Grossman, 485

<sup>215</sup> Grossman, 491

graphic novel versions of *Notre-Dame de Paris*,<sup>216</sup> aimed at children. Such novels, which are based on a variety of classic novels and plays, spread the net wider for populations who for a variety of reasons do not read the unabridged versions, thus bringing in more interest.

The two Shanghai productions, as we will discover throughout this chapter, pull from a variety of influences, both Western and Chinese. However, despite these many influences, for the most part both *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou* are *jingju* performances. Looking at both productions, are they only meant to expand and challenge *jingju* artists or are they also meant to provide a picture of perfect cultural unity when recent Chinese policies towards minorities says the complete opposite?

### Creative Team

Heading the creative team for *Shengmuyuan* was First-ranked *qingyi* actress Shi Yihong, who has led a prolific career with the Shanghai *Jingju* Company. As a child, Shi began her training as a martial artist and then as a gymnast before turning to *jingju* at the age of ten.<sup>217</sup> She began to study *jingju* at the Shanghai *Xiqu* School (*Shanghaishi Xiqu Xuexiao* 上海市戏曲学校), where she started her training as a *wudan*, studying with two teachers, *wudan* and teacher Zhang Meijuan and Lu Wenqin, a *huqin* player who “took a very scientific approach to training singers.”<sup>218</sup> As a result of Lu’s training, Shi is now recognized as one of the few actors who can play a majority of *dan* role categories, subcategories, and characters.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Ford, Michael. *Victor Hugo’s The Hunchback of Notre Dame* B.E.S Publishing, New York, 2007; Hugo, Victor *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, part of the *Great Illustrated Series*, Waldman Publishing, New York, 2008

<sup>217</sup> Shi Yihong “Interview” May 2016.

<sup>218</sup> Shi Yihong “Interview” May 2016.

<sup>219</sup> Shi Yihong “Interview” May 2016.

As Shi was entering the SJC, the major reforms that were discussed earlier were beginning to take effect, allowing her to perform new roles in newly developed plays and productions. Shi, along with Yan Qinggu, was also chosen to join the first class of graduate students at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts (中国戏曲学院, NACTA) in Beijing. After graduating from NACTA in 1996, while developing and growing in her career, Shi began training in ballroom dance, competing in the Shanghai Semi-Final Dance Competition in tango, rumba, and paso doble.

Dong Hongsong, a young *hualian* actor, was chosen to play Chounu (Quasimodo). Much like the younger Chinese population, Dong grew up without much exposure to *jingju*. The only real exposure he had was to the traditional *xiqu* forms of Wuhan in southeastern China, *hanju* (汉剧) and *chuju* (楚剧), which he was dragged to by his grandparents. However, whenever he was at home, Dong would stick “the cap from a medicine jar in my ear to make it look like a [cap]wing [for a traditional *xiqu* male character]...And yet at the same time, I hated the plays. Very strange.”<sup>220</sup> As he began studying *jingju*, Dong realized that he had “developed a sense for the flavor of *jingju*,”<sup>221</sup> eventually finding a spiritual affinity for it.<sup>222</sup> Dong expressed a desire that new actors should not blindly follow the Masters, but that new blood needs to be injected into *jingju*. This not only applies to new actors, but also to new performances, such as *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou*.<sup>223</sup> Dong’s story about his growing interest in *jingju* is typical of the stories I heard from younger people, including myself, who grew up not liking *jingju* and choosing

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<sup>220</sup> Dong, Hongsong, “Interview” 2016

<sup>221</sup> Dong, Hongsong, “Interview” 2016

<sup>222</sup> Dong, Hongsong, “Interview” 2016

<sup>223</sup> Dong, Hongsong, “Interview” 2016

to watch something else. The development of new plays and the injection of “new blood” serves a purpose because it can help to bring in the youthful non-enthusiasts.

As is typical for plays that are revived, *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang Zhonglou* had different directors. For the first production, Shi Yihong approached Shi Yukun, a *jingju* director who had previous adaptation experience with SJC adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, (*Wangzi dan chouji*), when she first started thinking about creating *Shengmuyuan*. Because Shi Yihong had final creative authority for the production, Shi Yukun agreed to work on it if he believed that Shi Yihong was on the right track. Shi Yihong contacted and worked with choreographer Gao Xiaoya from the Shanghai Opera and Dance Theatre, and composer Yang Nailin, a *jingju huqin* player at the Central Music Conservatory, on building Ailiaya’s character through a combination of modern and classical dance and Chinese and Romani music. After seeing this creative process, Shi Yukun agreed to work on the production.<sup>224</sup> When the SJC decided to revive and change the production to create *Qingshang zhonglou*, Shi Yukun was not available. This time SJC retained final creative authority itself, a practice that is much more common than granting it to a single artist, and asked Yan Qinggu, who had played a variety of roles in *Shengmuyuan*, to serve as director. In that capacity he brought in several changes that Shi Yihong, no longer having creative control, disliked but could not prevent, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

### **Pre-Production**

#### **The Idea**

Before Shi Yihong, Mei Lanfang had considered adapting *Notre Dame* to the *jingju* for one of his students, Yan Huizhu (1910-1966), but was forced to “abandon the project”<sup>225</sup>. In an interview between Li Ruru and Shi Yihong, Shi, a trained *Meipai* (Mei Lanfang School) *dan*,

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<sup>224</sup> Shi “Interview” May 2016

<sup>225</sup> R. Li “The Market”, 142.



explained that she wanted to pursue Mei Lanfang's idea because she believed that "we definitely have to make breakthroughs and not be so scared about what people who aren't in the field will say. As long as I am willing to take the risk"<sup>226</sup> She expanded this statement later in our interview:

My personality is very different from Yan Huizhu's. I don't have her bold, unconstrained Mongolian character. Also she was very warm. I'm not so. When I wanted to perform Esmeralda, everyone was surprised. How can you act as a gypsy? Also, she's at the bottom of society and a very loose woman. I felt that because of these differences, playing the role would be more interesting. And no one could imagine how I was going to use *jingju* to make playing the gypsy more convincing.<sup>227</sup>

Shi's belief in her acting skills and the challenge she posed to herself created a "gypsy with a warm heart." However, the concept of a "gypsy" is a foreign concept in China with the closest group of people being national minorities. However, in discussing Ailiya's characteristics and the elements that went in to creating her character, there is a risk of conflation between a gypsy and a national minority. However, I believe that this conflation actually occurred in the creative process because there was nowhere else for the Creative team to look than to the large number of national minority groups. The fact that Ailiya, in both *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou*, is inspired by a variety of national minorities with the addition of Romani music and she is still called a gypsy shows, to me, a strong and dominant desire to display the exotic and the inaccurate image of the "happy minority," which is a piece of propaganda spread by the Chinese government.

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<sup>226</sup> Shi "Interview" May 2016.

<sup>227</sup> Shi "Interview" May 2016.

## Adaptation Process

### Creating the Script

In order to adapt Hugo's novel to *jingju*, playwright Feng Gang, who had previously written the *jingju* version of *Hamlet* (*Wangzi dan chouji*), focused on Ailiya's character as kind hearted gypsy, or minority, girl who is the center of a love triangle between Chounu and Abbott Luo. Following *jingju* plot convention, which state that *jingju* plays follow one central character with few side plot line and that Shi was meant to be the featured performer, Feng focused on Ailiya and the people who surround her, mainly the Beggar King (Clopín) and his band of Beggars, Chounu (Quasimodo), Abbott Luo (Frollo), and Tianhao (Phoebus). However, Pierre Gringoire, the poet who marries Esmeralda in name only is absent from this list. I believe it is because Esmeralda and Gringoire's relationship was purely transactional as she offers to marry him for four years to save him from being hanged. On the other hand, her relationships with the Beggar King, Chounu, Abbott Luo, and Tianhao are based on some form of love, whether it be the father-daughter love as in Ailiya's relationship with the Beggar King, or friendship love with Chounu, or unrequited romantic love on the part of Abbott Luo (and Chounu as well), and on Ailiya's own part with Tianhao. These relationships are the most dramatic, and they push the *jingju* version of the story forward towards the final battle between Tianhao's troops and the Beggars who attempt to rescue Ailiya.

In Hugo's original novel, Notre-Dame plays a central role, not as a religious establishment, but as a symbol of "the inevitable and recurrent cycles of human evolution – repression, by religious or secular authority, giving way to freedom as the people's hour strikes."<sup>228</sup> The religious aspect of the cathedral becomes almost irrelevant, while the social and

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<sup>228</sup> Krailsheimer xxiv.

human interactions around and in the cathedral become more important to the story. The cathedral becomes a place of sanctuary for Esmeralda and Quasimodo: protecting Esmeralda from Frollo, and shielding Quasimodo from the scorn he would experience outside of his bell tower while giving him a bird's eye view of Paris.

Much like Hugo, Feng does not use the temple spaces in *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou* as religious locations. Instead Feng utilizes these spaces as gathering places, another common use for the temple courtyard that goes back to Ancient China and early theatre. It is in front of the temple that a majority of the important events occur: Ailiya meeting Chounu, Abbott Luo, and Tianhao; her near execution; and the final battle that kills her. What Ailiya never does is claim sanctuary. She only enters the temple because Chounu carries her in after rescuing her from her execution. Dong Hongsong, who played Chounu, stated that the reason why Ailiya never claims sanctuary is because Chinese and Western religions do not work the same way.

The Catholic Church functions in a different way from the way a temple functions here. In the West, there is a notion that the church is a sanctuary, but in China, for the temple, there is no such notion.<sup>229</sup>

#### Naming the Play

In our interview, Yan Qinggu voiced his belief that there are two methods for adaptation: either the creative team “recognizes that this is a Western play and uses Western methods, [or they] can approach the play as if it were written in Chinese, for Chinese actors, using Chinese stagecraft.”<sup>230</sup> Among Feng's many drafts, the story remained the same, while the title of the production changed several times, in order to adequately capture both the essence of the story and the physical location. Li Ruru believed that the common practice of translating the original title, in this case, *Notre-Dame*, would sound too foreign.<sup>231</sup> At the same time, others, especially Shi

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<sup>229</sup> Dong “Interview” December 2015.

<sup>230</sup> Yan, “Interview” 2016.

<sup>231</sup> R. Li “Market” 143.

Yihong, believed that if the title were changed, the story would lose most, if not all, connection to Hugo and become “just another Chinese story.”<sup>232</sup>

The Oxford Chinese Dictionary translates *shengmu* as “goddess, or the Blessed Mother, Madonna.” The 2008 production was initially titled *Bali Shengmuyuan* (巴黎圣母院), or *Notre Dame de Paris*. However, according to Wichmann-Walczak, the 2008 production was not as popular as the SJC felt it could be. The SJC believed this was because the production was set in Europe and told a European story, producing an estrangement, and possibly because it was seen as placing at least some emphasis on Christianity. In 2011, the creative team and company leaders, led by Yang Qinggu and Feng Gang, decided to drop the “*Bali*” and replace it with *Qingshang Zhonglou* (情殇钟楼), or *Love and Death in the Bell Tower*,<sup>233</sup> emphasizing, instead, the emotional and sentimental trajectory of the story instead of highlighting a specific location and in keeping with the Romanticism of the original novel. This decision was made in order to solidify the play more concretely in Chinese culture. In our interview, Yan noted “we dropped the religious context and made it about the tribe.”<sup>234</sup> Dong agreed with this change, stating that

When we took a Western story to China, we changed the background of the story. It wasn’t set in a church in Paris. It also wasn’t set in any specific area of China, it was set in a fictional place. Chinese and Western religions are very different.<sup>235</sup>

Shi, on the other hand, felt that *Qingshang zhonglou* had lost much of Victor Hugo’s original content and spirit. Despite that, however, Shi conceded that the second approach to adaptation was the better option because had the potential to resonate more with the Chinese audiences.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Shi Yihong, “Interview” May 2016.

<sup>233</sup> Wichmann-Walczak “Interview” 2018; she observed the full creative process for *Qingshang zhonglou*.

<sup>234</sup> Yan “Interview”, April 2016.

<sup>235</sup> Dong “Interview,” December 2015

<sup>236</sup> Shi “Interview” May 2016.

Feng Gang, in adapting the novel for *jingju*, emphasized Ailiya (Esmeralda)’s morality, especially within the context of the love square between herself, Tianhao (Phoebus), Chounu (Quasimodo), and Abbot Luo (Frollo). Ailiya’s tragedy and moral compass allowed Shi Yihong to have the opportunity to demonstrate her acting and singing skills, especially when interacting with each individual man. The combination of the story that Feng wrote and the final title helps the viewer to understand that it is about the people and their interactions with each other, along with the feelings they hold towards each other, which just happens to take place within the sphere of a temple.

### **Conventions Used and Adapted**

#### Role Categories

#### Ailiya (艾丽雅 Esmeralda)

When creating Ailiya as a *jingju* character, the broadest overall consideration was the supposed portrayal of “gypsy,” in *Shengmuyuan* and second, a national minority in *Qingshangzhonglou*, albeit, a very stylized and conventionalized version. Then, on a more personal level, she is feisty, playful, and fights for her family of beggars led by the Beggar King. At the same time, she “is a crimson rose with many thorns, but inside her she has a very traditional idea of being faithful to one man,”<sup>237</sup> again emphasizing the conventional morality for *dan* characters. Fittingly, since Shi Yihong was to play her, the character Ailiya was therefore conceived of as a *wudan* and *qingyi*-leaning *huashan*.

Performing this role also gave Shi Yihong the opportunity to tap into her extensive background as a ballroom dancer, specializing in tango, rumba, and paso doble. All of these dance forms, while not unusual in the Western ballroom dance are out of place in *jingju*, convention, and

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<sup>237</sup> R. Li “Market” 144.

Chinese culture, which then gives off an exotic image along with the image of “otherness” needed for Ailiya. At the same time, considering that Shi had won prizes in competition for the tango, rumba, and paso doble, her skill in these dances was at the same level as her *jingju* skills, allowing her to blend both ballroom and *jingju* in such a way that would be effective.

Chounu (丑奴 Quasimodo)

Chounu, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, was conceived of primarily as a *hualian* role, and is played by Dong Hongsong, a *hualian* actor as a *hualian* role category character. *Hualian* techniques formed the basis for Dong’s creation of new movements, gestures, and steps to produce the limp and appearance of a hunchback, while creating a personality for Chounu that could switch from being strong and powerful to being appealing, comic, and sweet. Dong Hongsong also relied on his *hualian* training for his vocals, switching back and forth from an incoherent stutter when around other characters to perfect and flawless speech when alone.

Abbot Luo (洛族长 Frolo), Tianhao (天昊 Phoebus), and King Of Beggars (小金哥 Clopin)

The other three male characters are Abbot Luo, Tianhao, and the King of Beggars. Each of the three men holds a position of authority among a specific group of people, and fights for what he believes is best for that group. All three men also have certain levels of loyalty to Ailiya, whether or not they choose to acknowledge it.

Abbot Luo, conceived of as a *laosheng*, is set in his ways and holds authority over the spiritual wellbeing of the community around him. Luo is unable to accept anyone who he deems to be harmful to his congregation, specifically Ailiya and the beggars led by the King of Beggars.

Tianhao (Phoebus) is a combination of a *wusheng*, a martial male character, and a *xiaosheng*, a younger male character. As captain of the guard, he is in control of the safety of the temple and of his soldiers. Yet he flirts with and almost spends a night with Ailiya until Luo

attacks him and stabs him in the back, out of jealousy. At the end of the play, however, despite Ailiya's love for him, Tianhao does not acknowledge her, showing her that her love for him was actually unrequited and that she merely a conquest for him.

The King of the Beggars is a *chou* with both martial and civil qualities. He is in charge of his group of beggars who have settled around the temple, including Ailiya who he has raised since childhood. His dedication to Ailiya is like a father's for his daughter. He opens the play by leading the beggars in crowning Chounu the King of Fools. Throughout the play, he shows himself to be protective of the group he leads and Ailiya. When he finds out that Ailiya is trouble, he rallies his troops and fights with and for her.

### Dance-Acting

Performing difference is a major part of both versions of this adaptation because the play revolves around groups of outsiders, including characterizations of different minority groups, and of a person with physical differences. To emphasize the differences inherent in the two major characters, Ailiya and Chounu, the creative teams relied a great deal on specific performance elements to create those distinctions.

Shi's dance background, especially her study of Latin-influenced ballroom dance, along with some unusual blocking, were instrumental in creating the characterization of Ailiya. In the 2008 version, Shi runs on stage from the space between the first and second wing for Ailiya's first entrance. In the 2011 version, Yan changed the location of her entrance from the wings to upstage, where she almost magically appears; audiences, especially those who are familiar with *jingju* convention, would understand that both entrances are unusual. From that point on, Ailiya's choreography in both versions, created by Gao Xiaoya of the Shanghai Opera and Dance Theatre, was largely influenced by ballroom dance, which was deemed appropriate for the

character of Ailiya.<sup>238</sup> Ailiya concludes her first *liangxiang*—the movement into a dynamic pose described earlier in this dissertation—in a wide stance in a B plus position. B plus position, with one turned out foot placed firmly on the stage, while the other foot is behind and resting on the ball, is most often seen when a ballet dancer starts a combination, with hands on hips. This position is similar to that for an angry *jingju dan* character, but this is Ailiya’s go-to starting position. Her first steps are a combination of *jingju* movements, tango and paso doble. This is especially seen in the way that Ailiya almost separates her body into two halves, where the lower body stays still with one leg bent in the air, while the upper body twists around to face the audience. The fusing of these three types of dance creates an image of a character who plays by her own rules, while is also representative of a *jingju* actor who is willing and able to take risks with her career in fusing all of these different influences together (Fig 16).



Fig 16: Shi Yihong in *Shengmuyuan/Qingshang zhonglou*

Fusing different dance forms together.

In addition to Ballroom, contemporary dance is used during a touching *pas de deux* between Ailiya and Chounu in the second act. Leading up to this moment, Chounu has just rescued Ailiya from being executed for Tianhao’s death, defying the only “father” he has ever

<sup>238</sup> Dong “Interview” December 2015.



known. He is scared of what he has just done and Ailiya tries to cheer them both up by starting to dance. Instead of the Latin/Western inspired tango, rumba, or paso doble, Gao used contemporary dance, a more lyrical and classically-based dance form often associated with the romantic. The *pas de deux* these two characters performed together was full of balletic lifts, with Dong taking on the role of the male dancer whose main function is to support the ballerina, in this case, Shi. This arrangement, while conventional for ballet, is foreign to *jingju* but makes sense for their characters, since Ailiya is the dancer and Chounu walks with a limp. The piece ends with Shi stepping on to Dong's bent knee with her left leg in an *attitude* and her arms in a first *arabesque* position, and the two looking at each other in a moment of joy and love (Fig 17 and 18).



Fig 17 and 18: The *pas de deux* between Ailiya and Chounu.

Ailiya's death is another moment in which Shi's non-*jingju* training helped her to simulate a corpse that is moved by someone else. In a carefully choreographed piece that mostly remains close to the ground, Dong dances with Ailiya's "dead" body, manipulating and moving her around as if they were dancing together. He lifts her arm up in the air and lets Shi's seemingly lifeless arm fall to the ground. This dance was full of carefully controlled gestures and movements that simulated Ailiya's lifeless body while being safe for both performers and providing a touching end to the play.

## Music - Composing for Different Ethnicities

### Ailiya

Upon Ailiya's first entrance, the audience is introduced to Ailiya's theme song entitled "I am a Vagrant" ("我的名字叫流浪"). Composed by atmospheric music composer Yang Nailin, the idea of the theme song for a specific character, which originated from *yangbanxi*, was used in a performance of *Datang guifei* (大唐贵妃, *The Imperial Concubine of the Tang Dynasty*, 2003), a symphonic *jingju* performance based on Mei Lanfang's plays and arias. For this performance, Yang composed an aria entitled "Lihua Song" ("永梨", *Ode of the Pear Blossom*),<sup>239</sup> which was very well received and has been performed many times since *Datang guifei* premiered.<sup>240</sup>

"I am a Vagrant" is influenced by a number of musical traditions, including Central Asian music styles, folk music, and *jingju* rhythmic elements. Yang also included rhythms from Romani, or gypsy, music because of Ailiya's ethnicity in *Shengmuyuan*. The theme song is introduced in both productions *a capella*. The use of Romani music in *Qingshang zhonglou*, when she was supposed to be portraying a national minority, not a gypsy, was never mentioned in my research as strange, further enhancing my belief that the conflation between gypsy and national minority occurred naturally.

In 2008, Ailiya runs on stage and plants herself center stage, while in 2011, she enters from upstage and poses in the middle of the top level of platforms. Ailiya repeats the title phrase, "I am a Vagrant" in *nanbangzi* (南梆子 Southern clapper mode). This particular mode is generally used only for female melodic passages, primarily for *xiaodan* (young *dan*) and for *xiaosheng* (young *sheng*), who both use the female melodic passages because they have not yet

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<sup>239</sup> R. Li, "Market" 144

<sup>240</sup> R. Li, "Market 144.

reached maturity.<sup>241</sup> It is associated with *yuanban* (primary-meter), *daoban* (lead-in meter), and *sanban* (dispersed meter) and written in the same modal rhythms as *xipi*, but with its own melodic contours.<sup>242</sup> Wichmann writes that *nanbangzi* is “graceful, smooth and contemplative,”<sup>243</sup> which when combined with Romani music, creates a sweetness that is crucial to Ailiya’s character.

Ailiya sings a different version of her theme song during the second act, after Chounu saves her from the execution grounds and she has discovered that Tianhao is actually alive, but has abandoned her. She cheers herself up by singing “I am a Vagrant” and then encouraging Chounu to dance with her. This leads to a very sweet moment between two characters who have found solidarity in the fact that they are different, either ethnically or physically, from the other characters. The third time the song appears is at the end, when Ailiya has died and Chounu dances with her corpse. As he moves her body around the stage, “I am a Vagrant” plays from offstage, creating another moment of affection between these two characters, which ends the play.

### Chounu

In developing the character of Chounu, the Creative team utilizes a vocal device that is often used in other adaptations, such as the musical version of Disney’s *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. To portray a character who, from the outside, looks different and can easily be put down, Dong Hongsong uses a stutter and only speaks when around other characters. However, when alone, Chounu sings flawlessly. Song, as stated in the introduction, is often used when Speech is not enough. The creative team has established that Chounu is unable to express himself with

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<sup>241</sup> Thorpe, “Music – China” 136.

<sup>242</sup> Wichmann, “*Listening*” 116

<sup>243</sup> Wichmann, “*Listening*” 134.

speech when around other people, so when he is by himself, the Song Skill becomes the outlet for Chounu to express his suppressed emotions.

Chounu has two major arias during the play, both of which come at pivotal moments in Chounu's character development. The first comes between the scene in which Ailiya rescues Chounu from being humiliated by the King of Beggars and his followers, and the scene in which Chounu rescues Ailiya from execution. Both arias are in *xipi*, indicative of lively or vehement emotions. In the first scene, it indicates happiness--Ailiya rescued him, and did so without flinching at his looks. For the aria in the second scene, the *xipi* mode conveys a certain level of agitation as he tries to figure out how to save Ailiya from death.

### The Love Triangle

The creative teams for both *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang Zhon lou* chose to perform a love triangle through Song, much as in *Zhuli Xiaojie*. This aria is split into thirds and includes Ailiya, Chounu, and Abbot Luo, all three singing in the *fanerhuang*, literally inverse *erhuang* mode. *Erhuang* mode creates an atmosphere of “relatively dark, deep and profound, heavy and meticulous” emotions<sup>244</sup>, and the *fan* or “inverse” version of it heightens those feelings<sup>245</sup>. All three characters involved are contemplative and peaceful, but the use of *fanerhuang* highlights the sense that the tragedy will soon come.

For each character, movement between specific metrical types helps to show changes in emotion. Ailiya starts her aria in *sanban*, literally dispersed meter. This particular metrical type is the most basic of those in free meter, which indicates the “stopping of the heart”—a pure outpouring of emotion. It is used to convey her happiness at having found love. Ailiya then moves into *huilong*, literally “undulating dragon” meter, a very melismatic metrical type which

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<sup>244</sup> Wichmann, “Listening” 85.

<sup>245</sup> Wichmann, “Listening” 71.

bridges between *sanban* and another metrical type, and uses the meter and tempo of that following metrical type, in this case *manban*, literally slow meter. *Manban* is the slowest of all metrical types, indicating deep reflection and, in the *fanerhuang* mode, a sense of hopelessness.<sup>246</sup>

The musical progressions for both Chounu and Abbott Luo demonstrate their respective loves for Ailiya. Chounu starts in *manban*, showing his state of deep reflection and sense of hopelessness, while Abbott Luo starts in *sanban*, indicating his great excitement. Both end their arias in *yuanban*, literally primary meter, the most basic of the regulated meters, with the most moderate tempo.<sup>247</sup> All three characters conclude in *yaoban*, literally shaking meter, a free meter metrical type that is somewhat faster than the *sanban*, and less melismatic. Although the sung line is free of metrical regulation, it is accompanied by an unrelated, extremely fast beat, thereby indicating “exterior calm and interior tension,”<sup>248</sup> further emphasizing the upcoming tragedy.

### **Sets & Lighting**

#### **Shengmuyuan**

Overall, the sets and lighting for *Shengmuyuan* were relatively simple, forcing the audience to focus completely on the action in front of them. The entire performance is set in front of a large brick wall painted on backdrops, meant to represent a wall of the temple, in front of which four stone lions were placed, a common fixture in Chinese culture and architecture. Platforms were also placed in front of the lions to represent different locations, including the execution grounds and the teahouse where Tianhao and Ailiya meet and also where Abbot Luo stabbed Tianhao in the back.

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<sup>246</sup> Wichmann “Listening” 61.

<sup>247</sup> Wichmann “Listening” 59.

<sup>248</sup> Wichmann “Listening” 70.

### Qingshang Zhongluo

The set for *Qingshang zhonglou* is even simpler than its predecessor. The temple wall is now represented by a single large backdrop, which is lit according to the mood of scene. This is in line with modern *jingju* staging convention, which relies, to a great extent on lighting than on sets to convey and atmosphere. Above the action, is a gate that hangs from a fly, which represents the entrance to the temple grounds. As for *Shengmuyuan*, three platforms were used to represent other locations, such as the execution ground and the teahouse, with the addition of a couch which Tianhao and Ailiya use during their seduction scene.

### **Costumes and Makeup**

#### Costumes

The costumes for *Qingshang zhonglou* were also different from those for *Shengmuyuan*, primarily more elaborate. Chounu's makeup also became more elaborate, as will be discussed below.

#### Ailiya

For *Shengmuyuan* the costumes have some Western influences. This stems from Shi Yihong's creative control over the piece and her desire to keep *Shengmuyuan* within its original Western setting. In that effort, Ailiya's costume was inspired by Shi Yihong's experiences with Spanish-inspired ballroom dance:

I told our costume designer that my costume not only needed a big skirt so that I could play, it also had to be useful because I didn't have watersleeves to move. As you would see in Spanish or gypsy dancing. So, in my big red skirt, he added pieces of colorful fabric so when you open up these pieces, it was very pretty. It was very heavy, but very pretty and easy to dance in. When I spun around, it looked very beautiful.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Shi "Interview" May 2016.

The headdress she wears in *Shengmuyuan* is a mixture of Western and Chinese influences, consisting of a wide red band that wrapped around Shi's head with a large red flower attached to the side. On the right side hung a long ponytail, which she played with during the entire production, showing some youthful innocence.

In 2011, however, when Shi no longer had final creative authority, the creative team reconceived of the production as *Qingshang zhonglou*, deciding to make it more Chinese and set it in . Ailiya and her costumes were reconceived to be a mixture of several different Western Chinese minority groups. However, at Shi's insistence, much of the costume remained the same, with the Spanish influenced flowing skirts and the hints of color. What did change was Ailiya's headdress, which became much more complex and took on more influence from Western Chinese minority groups, such as the Chiang and the Yi. The fabric was still knotted like a flower, but there were mini pheasant feathers tied into the knot. The use of these feathers gives her costume a further sense of exoticism and, because in *jingju* feathers are traditionally used only for martial characters, also shows the audience that Ailiya is a fighter, both literally and figuratively. She fights for her principals and how those affect others and she literally fights at the end of the play to protect her family. More jewels hang from both sides of her head, while the long ponytail on the right side is now made up of several small, thin braids.

The width of these skirts also accommodated Shi's physical stance throughout the production. Instead of the *qingyi*'s conventional *taibu*, or foot position, with both knees slightly bent, one foot turned out flat on the ground, and the other foot slightly behind the heel of the first and resting on the ball of the foot, Shi stood with one leg extended behind her and the other leg straight. The skirts were so large that standing in a traditional *taibu* would not have made

sense<sup>250</sup> and the larger, wider, more upright stance showed off the skirt to great advantage. The change in *taibu* also shows that conventions are never set in stone. Altogether, the creative teams for both productions created a costume that was reminiscent of several minority groups without being completely accurate and specific. However, they did adhere to the idea that Ailiya is exotic and unusual, while also observing the overall *jingju* principal of *mei*, or beauty.

In both the 2008 and 2011 productions, Ailiya is dressed in red with flowers embroidered on both her skirt and her top, showing her maturity and romantic natures. When she meets Tianhao in the teahouse, she wears a dress of pastel pink. In *jingju*, pastel colors are considered to be romantic, and are mainly reserved for youthful characters.<sup>251</sup> In the last half of the play, Ailiya is slated to be executed and eventually dies, so she wears a white dress, the color of death. Nonetheless, towards the end, she ties a red scarf around her waist, giving the audience an idea that there is some hope and maturity still within her.

### Chounu

Chounu's basic costume of brown pants, a brown tunic, and calf-high brown boots did not change between versions. However, what did change was the headdress that he wore. In *Shengmyuan*, Dong Hongsong, the *hualian* actor who played Chounu, wore a big and unruly hair piece that had a jewel inserted into the front. In *Qingshang zhonglou*, Chounu's headpiece was much neater and more contained than the previous one although it still had the jewel inserted into the front.

Chounu's makeup deserves a certain amount of discussion because it had to be designed in a way that "was both deformed and yet kind."<sup>252</sup> Not only did Dong portray Chounu's

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<sup>250</sup> R. Li "The Market" 146.

<sup>251</sup> Bonds 34.

<sup>252</sup> Dong "Interview" December 2015.



deformities through physical movement, but he also used makeup to show Chounu's facial irregularities. For his makeup, Dong and the designers mainly used *hualian* makeup techniques to develop two specific *lianpu*, literally "face chart(s)/score(s)," portraying the "violent, disgusting, crazed, even fearful – a person that people wouldn't want to be around. But then later on, we would show that he had a warm, lovely heart."<sup>253</sup> For every *hualian* character, the specific *lianpu*, which is made up of a main color and ornate patterns, gives the audience clues into that character's personality and at the same time, emphasizes the larger-than-life characteristics of *hualian* characters.

The main colors indicate personality traits, and may come from literary references, as well. This color can often tell an audience, especially those that are familiar with *jingju* meanings of colors, a lot about the character. Patterns on the face and other colors used in them give even more specific clues about the character's personality. These patterns can range from the simple to the ornate, and Alexandra Bonds writes that the "simpler the pattern, the more upright and stable the character, while the more complicated the pattern, the more unstable and tempestuous the character."<sup>254</sup>

For both productions, Chounu's makeup was designed to look ugly and deformed, while also adhering to the *jingju* aesthetic principle of *mei*, or beauty. Yan Qinggu expanded on this:

In modern plays, *da hualian* faces aren't painted in detail, instead they're sketched in to show a drunken face. I feel this is an art. It's possible through the makeup to show some of the content of the character's problem. Why not utilize this? It's really difficult to create an entirely new mask. The masks we have now took a really long time, many tries, and much input to figure out. And yet, we still haven't come out with a good crooked face. We shouldn't avoid the fact that this character is ugly, but in reality, has some some inner beauty.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Dong "Interview" December 2015.

<sup>254</sup> Bonds 208.

<sup>255</sup> Yan "Interview" April 2016.

In *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou*, Chounu's makeup, which changed several times, embraced his outward ugliness and his inner beauty. The main color of Chounu's makeup is brown, showing Chounu's integrity and upright morality.<sup>256</sup> The details of the makeup in *Shengmuyuan* stretched from his left eye down to the left side of his mouth, which was painted at a severe angle towards his chin. The creative process for the *lianpu* continued during performances, with one version of Chounu's *lianpu* made up of a lighter brown main color, and blush on the right cheek. Dong's left eye was painted in white with light red lines to look like deformities. Another version covered the left eye with a small wing design, and Dong also painted the left side of his mouth to look like a half a frown, similar to the makeup design of Western clowns. Both designs, while unique and representative of Chounu's deformities, forced Dong to contort the right side of his face for the entire performance.

In *Qingshang zhonglou*, however, Dong and Yan wished to use "different colors for the eyes and the nose based on the understanding that he had a kind heart."<sup>257</sup> As a result, the makeup was completely changed, using more ornate asymmetrical designs consisting of white around the right eye and the mouth to suggest Chounu's deformities. This allowed Dong to relax his face, as opposed to the demands of *Shengmuyuan*, in which his facial expressions became an important part of his makeup. For *Qingsheng zhonglou*, the top of the left eye was painted with white and the bottom was painted with red in the shape of a fat tear, representing Chounu's sadness. The mouth was painted with white and red makeup and elongated the ends of the mouth in opposite directions (Fig 19, 20, 21, 22).

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<sup>256</sup> Bonds 208.

<sup>257</sup> Dong "Interview" December 2015



Fig 19, 20, 21, 22:  
Various versions of  
Chounu's makeup

### Chief of Beggars

The costume for the Chief of Beggars, changes from Western in *Shengmuyuan* to Chinese in *Qingsheng zhonglou*, and the character also switches from being portrayed as a *laosheng* in 2008 to a *chou* in 2011. Despite the change in culture, both costumes paint a picture of a poor man who has traveled a great deal and has compiled a beautiful outfit out of a variety of materials.

In *Shengmuyuan*, the Chief wears a ragged emperor's headdress with colorful pieces of fabric hanging from one side and a fabric flower on the other side. He wears brown pants and tunic that have numerous silk patches sewn into them, a convention for indicting poverty in a beautiful way. His black beard is full but only chin length instead of the traditional chest length of a *laosheng* character, giving the Chief of Beggars a comedic angle while also highlighting his position as a King.

For *Qingshang zhonglou*, Yan and the Creative team researched historical Chinese “tribal societies” and discovered that:

A chief was in charge of all law, religion, and family order. The chief was very privileged. We discovered that during the Ming Dynasty, there were societies like this in regions outside of the parts of China controlled by the Central Government. So, we spent a lot of time ensuring that all of the various aspects of the story were integrated.<sup>258</sup>

To show his superior position in the group in all areas of life, the Creative team dressed the Chief in a robe that was half orange/red and half green, reminiscent of a monk’s robes. On his head, he wore a black pointed cap with small silver spines placed around the edge of the cap to look like a crown. To complete the transition from a *laosheng* to a *chou*, the Chief’s makeup consisted of a large white circle that went from his brow line to his top lip, encompassing his eyes and his nose, which had a small red dot painted on it (Fig 23 and 24).

Fig 23 and 24: Chief of the Beggars (L: *Shengmuyuan*, R: *Qingshang zhonglou*)



<sup>258</sup> Yan “Interview” April 2016.

## Conclusion

According to Carlson's Seven Relationships, *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou* both reside at the sixth relationship, where "foreign elements remain foreign used within familiar structures for *Verfremdung*, or shock value"<sup>259</sup> Given this status, both productions, retained elements of Romanticism, while also raising questions and awareness to about how Han-dominated theatre forms portray some of China's many minority groups.

In adapting *Notre Dame de Paris* to *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou*, Feng Geng managed to retain much of its original Romanticism because of its natural fit with *jingju*. The expression of emotion through the Song Skill is often demonstrated when words are not enough. For Ailiya, her role category designation a *qingyi* leaning *huashan* requires that Song be one of her main skills. In addition to the frequent use of Song, the structure of both productions remained true to Frye's description: Ailiya and Chounu go on a minor adventure when she is accused of Tianhao's murder and he rescues her. The crucial incident occurs with the beggars, led by their leader, rush in to save Ailiya, and then our heroine is killed at the end of the production.

The characters of Ailiya and Chounu created for *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou* highlight the specific issue of representing minorities in a Han-dominated theatre form. The majority of *jingju* characters are Han or Manchu, and therefore do not require the creation of different physicalities and movements. However, for characters that are different both ethnically and physically, most especially Ailiya and Chounu, the Creative teams of both productions used Western techniques and adapted *jingju* conventions to shock audiences into understanding that these characters are different than everyone else.

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<sup>259</sup> Carlson 83

In creating these minority character, the creative team apparently did not conduct any research into specific minority groups that might have served as models for the adaptation. In fact, when I asked Shi Yihong which minority group Ailiya was supposed to be from, she responded that Ailiya “is a representative of Western exotic culture. The Chinese Western frontier because the story is from the West.”<sup>260</sup> The vagueness of this statement is shocking and yet representative of how little the majority of the Chinese population knows about the lives Chinese minorities, as shown in the pictures below (Fig 25, 26, 27).<sup>261</sup> What the creative teams produced in Ailiya was a display of what Shi, the *qingyi* actor could do, not what was actually accurate for a given ethnic minority because it did not have to be.

In conducting research on the costumes of Ailiya, the Beggar King, and the Beggars, I asked a colleague who had been studying Chinese minorities, specifically the Hui, about what kind of minority these characters could be judging by their costumes. He responded with a series of pictures of different minority groups that the creative team garnered inspiration from the below billboards.



Fig 25, 26, 27: Happy minority billboards in Beijing, 2015-2016

What is striking about these billboards, which were placed on Niu Jie (牛街 Cow Street) across the street from the only mosque in Beijing, is that while the government depict minorities

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<sup>260</sup> Shi “Interview” May 2016

<sup>261</sup> Courtesy of Dr. David Stroup, 2015-2016

in their traditional dress, they are promoting the stereotype of the happy minority, much like the happy minority image in the United States. These pictures do not reflect the real lives of minority groups in China especially in light of the recent incarcerations of Uighur, Kazakhs, and Krygyz minorities into re-training camps, reminiscent of the re-training camps during the Cultural Revolution,<sup>262</sup> the image of one combined-minority character with clearly Western style movements presents an uncomfortable statement, saying that minorities are basically all the same and can be Sinicized. Stereotyping different groups of people is not unusual in *jingju* but if the Chinese government wants to present a picture of a unified China through *jingju* that might be acceptable to ethnic minorities, it really must support more research and initiatives into minority representation.

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<sup>262</sup> Thum 2018.

## CHAPTER 5: *WOYICAIKE* (《沃伊采克》 *WOYZECK*) (2012)

### Introduction

In one sense, the creative processes discussed in this dissertation thus far have followed standard *jingju* practice even though not all of the artists involved have been Chinese professional *jingju* artists. The next two case studies, however, are both products of international cooperation, including the incorporation of different theatrical viewpoints, creating a more experimental cultural context. While great value and insights can be gained from international cooperation, the integrity of the original source and final performance can almost take a backseat to the power dynamics of the international creative teams. This is especially important to remember when discussing productions such as *Woyicaike* (沃伊采克 *Woyeck*) and *Fushide* (浮士德 *Faust*), productions intentionally brought to audiences who were not familiar with either the original play or the theatre form being employed, as well as to audiences unfamiliar with both.

The first international production I will discuss is *Woyicaike* (沃伊采, *Woyzeck*), directed by German director Anna Peschke for performance in Germany and performed as a solo performance by the *wusheng* actor Zhang Song of the National Chinese *Jingju* Company. In terms of intercultural analysis, *Woyicaike* presents us with our own challenge as well. From which point of view do we assess a stage or stages to this performance? That of the German, or domestic, audience member? Or of the Chinese, or foreign one? This interplay lends an interesting dynamic to the discussion of international *jingju* productions in terms of the adaptation and production process. Much of my performance analysis comes from a video recording made of a performance that took place in Frankfurt, Germany, augmented by interviews and articles written about the event.



### Büchner and Woyzeck (1836)

*Woyzeck* (1836), an unfinished play written by Georg Büchner (1813-1897), is based on the true story of Johann Christian Woyzeck, a German soldier who was put on trial for killing his girlfriend. Büchner was strongly influenced by his concern for the oppressed and the reaction surrounding the trial while writing his final play. In the play, Woyzeck is a soldier who also serves as batman, or aide, to The Captain. Additionally, he also acts as a guinea pig for The Doctor, who puts him on a pea-only diet in order to judge how a person's mind and body behaves with such limited nutrition. Meanwhile, The Drum Major, the military's mascot who has been visiting with Woyzeck's girlfriend, Marie, begins to show off his looks and seduces her. Woyzeck catches them dancing and as a side effect of having eaten nothing but peas for an extended period of time, Woyzeck's jealousy grows to such a feverish pitch that he kills Marie and then kills himself in the river.

This play, though unfinished, explores how the upper classes exploit the lower classes for their own personal gain, and is as much a study in human behavior as are *Miss Julie* and *Death of a Little Servant*. Büchner was staunchly committed to the “violent overthrow of what he saw as a parasitical, illegitimate, and effete ruling class, and to the resurgence and emancipation of the viciously exploited popular mass.”<sup>263</sup> The exploitation of the lower classes is a constant topic of conversation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially in the United States where the current Trump Administration, which had campaigned on the idea of bringing back jobs to the working class population, is instead constantly choosing rich donors for positions of power and passing legislation that overwhelmingly favor the top 1% over the 99% beneath them. The upper-class characters in *Woyzeck* are extreme, but unfortunately, do resonate with what the everyday person

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<sup>263</sup> Reddick “Georg Büchner”xii

is feeling. Similarly, Woyzeck's character development follows an extreme version of what the average person feels: overwhelmed and placed in horrible circumstances that would drive anyone to extreme measures.

### Woyicaike (沃伊采克 *Woyzeck*) and the Creative Team

Anna Peschke, the German director of *Woyicaike* (2012), came to the production with a strong interest in *jingju* and a basic knowledge of its conventions at the time this production was undertaken, but no formal *jingju* training. Because of her limited understanding of *jingju* and its conventions, she and solo actor Zhang Ming<sup>264</sup> often discussed basic issues involving how the performance should be created, including such instances as Peschke insisting on long demonstrations of hair and makeup that Zhang believed would be boring for an audience to watch.

In order to realize Peschke's goals, she and Zhang compromised and relied heavily on each other, and eventually created a performance that was basically satisfactory to both. Her first goal was to see if Western audiences could understand the conventions of *jingju* without any obvious access to language. As a result, Zhang and Peschke combined Western and *jingju* theatre conventions in order to tell the story through movement, which they believed would lead to letting the audience dream and imagine their own meanings<sup>265</sup>. Her second goal was to demonstrate *jingju's* potential to tell a well-known German story to German audiences. Meeting this goal led to the ongoing discussion between Zhang and Peschke about the process of adaptation, which Zhang described to me in our interview:

In a one- hour performance, you can't include the entire play, you need to pick a few sections. Later she would talk about what she thought and then I would go develop it into a drama. However, I didn't want to use traditional *jingju*. So, we included some physical changes and different performance styles. Anna agreed

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<sup>264</sup> This actor asked that I not use his real name, therefore, I have provided him with a fake one for the purposes of this dissertation.

<sup>265</sup> Anna Peschke "Interview" April 2016.

with my thinking. This show involved many characters. In order to perform these characters, I had to use some very distinctive *jingju* methods so when people saw it, they could see that we had included *jingju* methods.<sup>266</sup>

The duo came to the conclusion that this production should actually be called a performance with *jingju* elements, therefore emphasizing the experimental structure of the performance (Figs. 28 and 29). Upon their arrival at the theatre, audiences received a single piece of paper providing a short description of each scene along with any dialogue included in it, given in both German and English (Fig 30). This piece of paper became the audience's subtitles and scene synopsis for a performance that was primarily movement and combat, with a little speech in Chinese, rather than German because of the language barrier between the audience and the actor. Because of this language barrier, Zhang and Peschke decided to not use the Speaking and Singing Skills as much as Dance-Acting and Combat.

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<sup>266</sup> Zhang "Interview" May 2016.

## Woyzeck als Pekingoper-Solo

nach Büchner

mit Zhang Tengfei

Komposition und Perkussion: Michael Weilacher

Regie: Anna Peschke

### Szenenablauf Woyzeck (*Sequence of Scenes Woyzeck*)

Fig 28 and 29: Outline of scenes, including dialogue.

1) Auftritt des Schauspielers (*Entrance of the actor*)

2) Woyzeck muss exerzieren.

Woyzeck hört Stimmen, die aus dem Boden zu ihm sprechen.

Woyzeck zählt Erbsen.

*Woyzeck has to exercise.*

*Woyzeck hears voices speaking to him from the ground.*

*Woyzeck counts peas.*

3) Der General ermahnt Woyzeck „Langsam, immer langsam, er sieht immer so verhetzt aus. Ein guter Mensch tut das nicht, einer, der ein gutes Gewissen hat!“

„Was denkst über meinen Bart? Damit sehe ich doch aus, wie ein tugendhafter Mensch, man erkennt doch gleich: Der hat eine Moral!“

*The General admonishes Woyzeck: "Slowly, always slowly, he always looks so rushed. A good person doesn't do that, someone with a good conscience! "*

*"What do you think about my beard? With that I look like a virtuous man, you can tell right away: this one has morals! "*

4) Der Doktor „Ich bin Arzt und Lehrer. Als Arzt kann ich alle Krankheiten heilen. Als Lehrer kann ich alle Fragen beantworten. Hier kommt ein kranker, schwacher Armer. Seht ihr wie er zittert, schwankt und atemlos keucht? Ich gebe ihm kein Medikament, sondern diese Erbsen zu essen. Ich möchte ihn immer beobachten, jede Minute, jeden Tag, jedes Jahr.“

Woyzeck kämpft mit den Erbsen.

Doktor „Sehen Sie, er ist wie ein Tier, wie ein Esel!“

*The Doctor "I am a doctor and a teacher. As a doctor, I can cure all illnesses. As a teacher, I can answer all questions. Here comes a sick, weak wretch. Do you see how he trembles, staggers and gasps after air? I don't give him any medicine but make him eat these peas. I want to watch him all the time, every minute, every day, every year. "*

*Woyzeck struggles with the peas.*

*Doctor "Look, he's like an animal, like a donkey!"*

5) Woyzeck findet keinen Schlaf.

Woyzeck möchte den Atem anhalten, weil die Welt so still ist.

*Woyzeck is unable to sleep.*

*Woyzeck wants to hold his breath, because the world is so quiet.*

| 6) Der Tambourmajor umgarnt Marie.

*The drum major ensnares Marie.*

7) Marie wäscht Wäsche im Fluss, dabei erinnert sie sich an die Begegnung mit dem Tambourmajor.  
Sie tanzt für ihn. „Wie soll ich wissen, dass es Frühling ist, wenn ich nicht im Garten war?“  
| Sie wird von Woyzeck ertappt bei diesen Tagträumen.

*Marie washes laundry in the river, remembering the encounter with the Drum Major. She is dancing for him. "How should I know it's spring if I haven't even been in the garden?"*  
*Woyzeck catches her daydreaming.*

8) Woyzeck erblickt Marie und den Tambourmajor beim Tanzen.

Woyzeck geht mit Marie in den Wald.

Woyzeck hört die Stimmen, die ihm sagen „Stich sie tot!“

| Er bringt Marie um.

*Woyzeck spots Marie and the drum major dancing.*  
*Woyzeck goes with Marie into the forest.*  
*Woyzeck hears the voices that tell him "stab her to death!"*  
*He kills Marie.*



Fig 30: *Woyicaike* Poster from the Chinese production

### **Conventions Used and Adapted**

#### *Solo Performance - "Everything Can Dance in Jingju"*<sup>267</sup>

Peschke originally conceived of *Woyicaike* as a two-person performance, with Zhang performing the role of Woyzeck, and *hualian* (painted face/bravura male) actor Liu Dake (刘大可) performing all of the other roles, which Zhang compared to a *liyuanxi*, a comedic performance between two peoples. However, Liu Dake broke his leg executing a jump during a performance, leaving Zhang to perform all of the parts, including Woyzeck. Performed in Frankfurt, Germany and, as described above, almost entirely without speech and focusing almost exclusively on the Dance-Acting Skill, the production requires an audience with limited to no knowledge of *jingju* to work through its own language barrier without supertitles used in the production because Peschke

<sup>267</sup> Zhang "Interview" May 2016.

felt that there was not enough text to warrant them. The lack of Speech is not an unusual occurrence in martial (武 *wu*) *jingju* plays, but the absence of supertitles with Speech, no matter how brief and infrequent, is unusual in modern *jingju* performance. For Zhang, this increased the need to rely almost completely on Dance-Acting in order to convey the story and Woyicaike's emotional arcs. As a result, Zhang incorporated both *jingju* and non-*jingju* elements into the dance-acting. In demonstrating his deep and strong understanding of how to manipulate three of the Four Main Skills to overcome the language barrier, Zhang also enhanced the experimental nature of the performance itself.

### Role Categories

#### Woyizaike (沃伊采克 *Woyzeck*)

In most solo performances in *jingju/xiqu*, as discussed above, the actor jumps between characters and demonstrates the change through the use of costumes and body language. In the case of *Woyicaike*, Peshke and Zhang decided to use mannequins to represent characters other than Woyicaike, each mannequin wearing the appropriate costume. Woyicaike, as the title character, is Zhang's "home base." Because Büchner's original *Woyzeck* was a soldier and a batman, Woyicaike is portrayed as a *wusheng*, a martial male role, and wears the padded vest that is traditionally worn under stage armor. Zhang switches between Woyicaike and the other characters by using parts of the provided costume pieces.

### Mannequins

The other major characters—The Captain, The Doctor, The Drum Major, and Marie—are all represented by mannequins, which according to Peshke and Zhang, were chosen because of their closeness to the human shape. The mannequins, which are mostly stationary throughout the performance, are placed around the playing space, also providing Zhang with tangible objects to

perform with.<sup>268</sup> As each character is portrayed, Zhang puts on elements of the costume and becomes that character, thus embodying each character and its role category for as long as needed.

"When Anna told me the show was going to be a monologue, at first I didn't realize that I would have to perform so many characters. I thought that *Woyzeck* is the main character while others just passed through. I thought all I would have to do as *Woyzeck* was talk about the other people. However, when we spoke in greater detail, I felt more and more that the play was different from my initial projection. Anna hoped that I would fully develop each of the five characters. I would then change to another character during which I only had to say a couple sentences. I thought the main thing was to watch Woyzeck's performance. But that wasn't the case. Anna wanted each character to have equal weight. She told me clearly that I had to fully develop each of the five characters. This was totally different from what I had expected. I had to develop both male and female characters, a handsome young guy, and a weathered old doctor. The characters were all pretty rich."<sup>269</sup>

As in many other solo performances, Zhang jump back and forth between characters. Each character has his or her own play time, enough to demonstrate the actor's skill and the character's part in the story, before the actor moves on.

### The Captain

In both the original German version of the play and the Chinese adaptation, the Captain is Woyicaike's superior officer. In Büchner's original, Woyzeck's role as the batman is represented through the act of shaving the Captain, and through the clear difference in status between the two characters. In *Woyicaike*, the Captain is represented as a *wu* (martial) *hualian*, specifically a general, demonstrated by his costume, which consists of a yellow robe representing stage armor, its skirt and shoulder pads, and a black as opposed to gray or white beard that indicates the relatively young age of the character (Fig. 31).

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<sup>268</sup> Anna Peschke "Interview April 2016.

<sup>269</sup> Zhang "Interview" May 2016.





Fig 31: Zhang Ming as The Captain.

The mannequin is lit upstage center, Zhang Song walks to it and puts on the beard, the shoulder pads, and the skirt. At that moment, he became the Captain, taking a wider stance with his arms bent and elbows out to the side to fill out the costume and create a wider silhouette. By creating this wider posture, Zhang shows the General's confidence and military bearing. As Zhang walks to the center of the stage, he does so with a specific pattern of *taibu*, or "stage steps," which present the larger than life physical presence that is typical of the *hualian* role category. He brings one knee up, extends the bottom half of his leg, and places it on the ground while also bringing in the other foot to meet it in the center, all while holding the side panels of the skirt out to the side.

### The Doctor

The Doctor in Büchner's original is fond of experiments with Woyzeck as his guinea pig, directing him to only eat peas. The way in which he examines Woyzeck purely as a scientific specimen is sadistic and sadly comical, which the creative team embraced, choosing the *chou* role category to represent The Doctor. He examines an invisible Woyicaike while wearing his hat and

a long string of beads, both important props for *chou* characters. As a demonstration of skill, the actor passes the beads between the Doctor and Woyicaike, by throwing them up in the air and catching them in different places around the stage, thus showing the struggle Woyicaike has with the Doctor (Fig 32).



Fig 32: Zhang Ming as  
The Doctor

### The Drum Major

In both Buchner's original and the Peschke-Zhang version, the Drum Major's main function in the play is to seduce Marie, Woycai's girlfriend. She is drawn to his handsome features and is easily taken in. Zhang described this particular character as

very handsome, but actually, he doesn't go to the [battle]front, he's the conductor of the military band. But you don't want the audience to get distracted, you need to keep their attention focused on the most important aspects of the character: that he's handsome and a womanizer. Basically, it fits the *wusheng* role category.<sup>270</sup>

As The Drum Major, Zhang shows the seduction of Marie by wearing the robe of a *wusheng*, the Drum Major's role category, and pulls Marie's mannequin, the only one on wheels, along with him. Interacting with the mannequin, The Drum Major flirts with Marie using his body and his eyes to show a haughty self-confidence, which he then uses to show off his finery and seduce her. The relationship between the Drum Major and Marie takes a turn for the worst, however, when he grabs her and attacks her. By the end of the play, Woycai is led to believe that Marie has cheated on him, which leads to her death.

### Marie

Zhang spends a considerable amount of performance time as Marie. These two characters are not only intimately attached to each other, they are also both easily manipulated. Marie is represented as a *qingyi*, wearing a long blue robe and the long silk hair which the actor ties around his head, giving the audience the most in-depth demonstration of putting on a costume in a short period of time. In our interview, Zhang shared the issues that he and Peschke had in choosing the proper *dan* role category.

In the beginning, we designed her as a lady in a big family but the second time I performed it, I told Anna that this wasn't right. I felt she was just a village woman. She's not delicate, poised, elegant and graceful. When we first started, we saw her

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<sup>270</sup> Zhang "Interview" May 2016.

as a lady because Anna loves the water sleeves and those big flags. But during rehearsals, the two of us had a difference of opinion about it. She asked why we couldn't use water sleeves. I told her that we could use it but we couldn't use it as we had planned. I noted that in *jingju*, village women sometimes also use water sleeves. However, we can't just focus on how pretty the sleeves are, we had to communicate something about the person's character and social status. I told her that in *jingju*, there are many ways to show how pretty a person is but that doesn't mean that each way is appropriate for every character.<sup>271</sup>

This interplay between Zhang and Peschke illustrates the dynamic that can occur in an international creative team in which someone's enthusiasm for a theatre form outside their normal practice does not always lead to good decisions. As mentioned before, Peschke had a limited understanding of the details of *jingju* conventions and movement and it was up to Zhang, through translators, to help her to understand that there are multiple ways to make something happen in *jingju*. Zhang stated in our interview that at first, Peschke wanted Zhang to present the entire process of putting on the makeup and hair for a *qingyi* character because she believed it would be beautiful and interesting to watch. However, the hair and makeup process for a *qingyi* could easily take close to an hour and Zhang believed that this would not be sufficiently exciting to engage an audience for that length of time, and would take them out of the performance as well.<sup>272</sup> As their relationship developed, Zhang and Peschke were able to compromise, with Zhang putting on the base layer of the *qingyi*'s hair, including the long silk hair, a light layer of makeup, and the *qingyi*'s robe and shoes. In my view, this short demonstration serves two functions. While it does give the audience a quick impression of what goes into visually creating a *dan* character, it also shows how important Marie is to the story, and to Woyicaike's state of mind when she dies, because now they are one person.

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<sup>271</sup> Zhang "Interview" May 2016.

<sup>272</sup> Zhang "Interview" May 2016.

### Dance-Acting

Dance-Acting, as previously stated, is by far the most frequently used skill in this production, in order to breach both the language and cultural barriers between Zhang and Pechke and Zhang and the audience.<sup>273</sup> Not only did this concession demonstrate how adaptable *jingju* is but it also forced the audience to pay more attention and experience "moments of contemplation,"<sup>274</sup> reaffirming Peschke's assertion that language does not have to be a barrier for international cooperation.

To tell the story within an hour and also because it would be a solo performance, Peschke selected scenes that she believed were the most important to tell the story and show Woyicaike's emotional arc through Dance-Acting. In this next section, I will discuss the scenes in chronological order, as they are presented in both the original script and the adapted performance, highlighting the use of each of the Four Main Skills, and especially emphasizing the dance-acting portions.

### "Woyicaike Hears Voices Speaking to Him from the Ground"<sup>275</sup>

In Büchner's original scene, Woyzeck and his friend Andres, both soldiers, are in the woods. Andres, who is not a character in *Woyicaike*, sings a tune while Woyzeck shares horror stories about the Freemasons, which Woyzeck describes as a group of magical beings:

WOYZECK. Yes, Andres: that streak there over the grass, that's where the head rolls in the evenings; someone picked it up once, thought it was a hedgehog. Three days and three nights, and he was lying in his coffin. (*Softly*) Andres, it was the Freemasons, that's it, the Freemasons – quiet!<sup>276</sup>

As Woyzeck tells his stories, Andres hears the military drums and they both realize that they are

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<sup>273</sup> Peschke, "Interview", 2016

<sup>274</sup> Peschke, "Interview", 2016

<sup>275</sup> Peschke; Zhang *Woyicaike* 1

<sup>276</sup> Büchner 113.

late for a military parade in town.

*Woyicaike* starts with this scene adapted into a dance sequence; it is fairly unusual for a *jingju* performance to begin with dance, but not for an experimental piece that is catering to a non-Chinese audience. Most of the sequence is martial, clearly showing that Woyicaike is a soldier. Zhang picks up his leg and stomps on the ground, following Büchner's stage direction, accompanied by percussion beats in accordance with *jingju* martial performances. After Woyicaike stomps on the floor, Zhang performs a *paoyuanchang* (跑圆场), literally "run round field," rapid, smooth movement in a circle, here indicating that Woyicaike has heard the drums from offstage and that he is quickly traveling to town.

The accompaniment accomplishes two main objectives. First, it connects this adaptation to the original play in which Woyzeck stomps on the ground to show Andres that the ground is hollow because the Freemasons have tunneled through it; and second, it highlights the connection *jingju* percussion has with performance. Percussion plays a major role in *jingju* performance, keeping tempo as the actors sing and move around the stage. It is used to create punctuation: "'emphasizing (*jiazhong*) and 'strengthening' (*jiaqiang*) the 'tone of voice' (*yuqi*) and the dance-acting movement skill (*zuogong*) of the stage performer."<sup>277</sup> The punctuation of the Dance-Acting serves to highlight movement of the Five Canons and costume pieces, such as sleeves, as appropriate. The percussion accompaniment not only tells audiences that the ground is hollow, but also create that connection between this adaptation and *jingju* convention.

### *The Doctor and Woyicaike*

Woyzeck makes money on the side by being a research subject for the Doctor. For three months, Woyzeck has been unable to eat anything except peas so that the Doctor can study the

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<sup>277</sup> Wichmann "Listening" 254.

effects of what a pea-only diet will do to a man. He presents Woyzeck at a medical conference sharing his findings with other medical personnel. In the two scenes that involve the Doctor and Woyzeck, the Doctor mainly uses medical terminology to discuss the world, creating a very satirical image of the educated and upper classes. In the first instance, he argues with Woyzeck that one's will rather than Nature is the dominant force:

DOCTOR. Call of nature! Call of *nature!* Don't give me nature! Have I not proved that *musculus constrictor vesicae* is subordinate to the will? Nature! Woyzeck, mankind is free, in man individuality attains its most perfect expression as freedom. Can't hold his water! (*Shakes his head, puts his hands behind his back, strides up and down.*) Have you eaten your peas, Woyzeck? I'm going to revolutionize science. I'm going to blow it all sky-high. Uric acid 0.1, ammonium hydrochlorate, hyperoxide. Woyzeck, surely you're ready for another piss? Just pop inside have a try.<sup>278</sup>

Two scenes later, the Doctor and Woyzeck are at a medical convention where the Doctor presents his findings, thus presenting Woyzeck as a medical experiment, instead of a human being:

DOCTOR. Gentleman, the beast has no instinct for science. *Ricinus*, come along, the finest examples, bring your fur collars. Then again, gentlemen, you can see something else instead: this human specimen here, d'you see, for three months it has eaten nothing but peas, observe the effects just feel how irregular the pulse is, here, and notice the eyes.

WOYZECK. Doctor -- everything's going dark. (*He sits down*)

DOCTOR. Cheer up, Woyzeck. Just a few more days and it'll all be over; examine him gentlemen, examine him. (*They feel his temples pulse, and chest*).<sup>279</sup>

The relationship between The Doctor and Woyzeck is not as broadly comical in the adaptation as it is in the original. Much of the Doctor's humor in Büchner's original play comes from his words, which is based off of Büchner's studies in Comparative Anatomy.<sup>280</sup> Although

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<sup>278</sup> Büchner 121.

<sup>279</sup> Büchner 126.

<sup>280</sup> Wessendorf "Interview" 2019

he is physically abusive to Woyzeck: restricting him to a peas-only diet, not letting him go to the bathroom because he missed the window when he could go to the bathroom,, constantly poking and prodding him. Zhang<sup>281</sup> relies on Dance-Acting to illustrate the difference in status between the Doctor and Woyicaike, specifically the dynamics of their doctor/experiment relationship. Zhang picks up the vest Woyicaike has been wearing, looks at it disdainfully and tosses it over to the side of the stage. The Doctor's condescending attitude towards Woyicaike continues throughout the scene, as Zhang shows the relationship turning violent when he begins to perform a martial sequence, with The Doctor as the attacker and Woyicaike as the victim. Zhang manipulates the beads, which is a part of The Doctor's costume, to make them look like a weapon in an expressive performance of tossing the beads in the air and quickly moving to another part of the stage to catch them. This sequence leads to a deadly struggle, which is the climax of the scene. Zhang, portraying Woyicaike, wears the beads around his neck and holds one hand close to his throat and another hand farther away from his face to show that The Doctor is strangling his patient. After the struggle is over, Woyicaike sits up and moves his eyes to the right and the left and then all around in order to show the confusion one would feel after being strangled almost to death.

### Marie Dreams of the Drum Major

Büchner describes the Drum Major as a "specially privileged senior N.C.O, used as a mascot and for recruitment purposes. Chosen for physique, splendidly uniformed; excused from normal duties."<sup>282</sup> From this, it is clear that the Drum Major is a very attractive, but useless, man. He employs his outward appearance to show off and flirt with Marie, which begins harmlessly

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<sup>281</sup> Peshcke "Interview" March, 2017; Zhang "Interview" April 2017.

<sup>282</sup> Büchner "*Woyzeck*"



and then turns into a struggle until he rapes her.

DRUM-MAJOR. Marie!

MARIE. (*with intensity as she looks at him*): Walk up and down, go on. Chest like an ox, beard like a lion... There's not another man like you... I'm the proudest woman in the whole wide world.

DRUM-MAJOR. You should see me on Sundays with me great plume of feathers and me white gloves, Marie, fair take your breath away; the Prince he always says, "Now there's a feller!"

MARIE. (*mockingly*): Get away! (*She goes right up to him*) What a man!

DRUM-MAJOR. And you're some woman. Christ almighty, we could breed little drum-majors like bloody rabbits – let's get started, eh? (*He puts his arm around her.*)

MARIE. (*Crossly*) Get your hands off!<sup>283</sup>

This moment is one of several in Büchner's original play where Marie flirts with the Drum-Major. These plot points, in addition to the effects of the Doctor's experiments, affects Woyzeck's already fragile mental state for the rest of the play, including Woyzeck's murder of Marie (Fig 33).



Fig 33: The Drum Major flirting with Marie.

In general, there are very few scenes where two characters appear together in solo performances, although it is possible. In the case of *Woyzeck*, Zhang and Peschke decided to

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<sup>283</sup> Büchner 120-121.

take advantage of the fact that Marie was a mannequin and mounted on wheels, allowing the actor to move it around the stage. Dressed as the Drum Major in the red robe of a *wusheng*, a male warrior, Zhang's body language and posture show the arrogance, virility, and grace needed for the *jingju*-based version of The Drum Major. These characteristics are especially clear in a vigorous movement sequence that starts when the actor tears the red robe off its mannequin and the percussion starts immediately. Swinging the robe around him in a large circle as he runs towards center stage, the actor throws the robe on to his shoulders and lands in another pose that he holds for a short pause, with his feet in a wide stance, weight on his back leg, his left hand holding the robe out, and his right hand wrapped in the sleeve, bent and held away from the body. Rocking back and forth, the actor swings the sleeve from his arm, unwrapping it to the accent beats from the drum. With a side eye, the actor runs to the Marie mannequin and, with another wide legged stance, runs his right hand down the back of the mannequin. When he comes up, Zhang holds a piece of thin rope that is connected to the mannequin's base. He walks out to center stage, pulling the mannequin with him, showing The Drum Major seducing Marie. Zhang walks around the mannequin, wrapping his arms around the neck and showing off his clothes and his masculinity.

The second half of this sequence is from Marie's point of view. The actor removes the Drum Major's robe and, in full view of the audience, changes into Marie's costume comprised of a blue robe, typical of a *qingyi*, and the white embroidered shoes with the tassels on the toes. Sitting at a vanity, the actor puts on the shoes and ties on *wangzi*, or skull cap that is first placed on the head and then the *xian lianzi*, the ponytail made up of long black cords that simulate tresses that fall to the *qingyi*'s knees.<sup>284</sup> By taking the time to put on this costume and the hair

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<sup>284</sup> Bonds 218

pieces, Zhang highlights the difference between *dan* and *sheng* costuming. After he finishes changing into Marie's costume, Zhang places the Woyicaike vest on Marie's mannequin and mimes Marie washing her clothes in a river, while she sings a short two-line aria, the only one in the play, making her character memorable and helping the audience to understand what her innermost thoughts are.

How should I know it's Spring, if I haven't even been to the garden?<sup>285</sup>

Zhang then pulls a chair to center stage to represent the Drum Major, and acts out Marie imagining what it would be like to dance with him. To do this, by Zhang holds Marie's tasseled shoes in the palm of his hand, and gently moves his hand in delicate patterns in the air.<sup>286</sup>

It is my impression that having Zhang spend more time changing into Marie's costume than into any of the others does help to convey that Woyicaike and Marie are in fact the same, and are both pawns of the characters who are superior to them. The two characters are unable to resist and fight against the Drum Major, the Captain, and the Doctor in turn, which results in tragic death for both Marie and Woyicaike. By suggesting that Woyicaike and Marie are the same, in opposition to the other more highly-placed characters, the creative team has really brought home the differences between classes and status. For every other character, the actor puts on parts of his costume: a hat, a robe, and a string of beads, enough to signify which character he is representing. However, for Marie, the actor makes sure that her physical presence is fully conveyed, and gives her significantly more stage time, showing her importance to the story, but also to the arc of Woyicaike's character.

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<sup>285</sup> Peschke; Zhang *Woyicaike* Script 2

<sup>286</sup> Peschke; Zhang: *Woyicaike* Script 2

### Marie's Death

In both the original German and the adapted *jingju* versions, Woyzeck discovers Marie dreaming of the Drum Major, which drives him to kill her. Büchner originally wrote that Marie and the Drum Major are dancing, which Zhang depicts with the help of Marie's shoes and lighting. Zhang, as Marie, gets up from the chair and removes her costume carefully and returns it to the mannequin. He takes her shoes, places them on his hands and begins to move them around first in gentle circles in the air, and then placing them on the floor, he leans over to them and lifts one leg up in the air, indicating that Marie and the Drum Major are dancing. To show that they've been caught, a mannequin wearing Woyicaike's vest is lit up, indicating his presence. Zhang then puts the vest back on, showing his return to Woyicaike. He looks at the Marie mannequin and begins to shake his hands and stomp his feet, the conventional way of showing distress. As the actor roughly moves the mannequin back to the stage, the music transitions into more energetic rhythms and he begins to show Woyicaike killing Marie.

Using primarily Combat movements, Zhang mimes punching the floor and shakes and rubs his hands together, showing distress. The tension builds and builds through a series of acrobatic moves, including *fanshen*, a twirling of the body while it is angled forward, with the arms extended to the side, as well as small hops with one hand and the opposite leg on the floor while the other two limbs are extended. As the sequence progresses, voices are heard, presumably telling Woyicaike to kill Marie. He nods his head in agreement with his eyes wide open and confused, makes a gesture of agreement and determinedly points two fingers, the traditional way of pointing for a *wusheng* character, in the direction of Marie. Woyicaike begins to argue with himself over whether or not he actually wants to kill her, through a series of mimetic gestures, representing his anguish and indecision, pro and con.

He stumbles back towards the Marie mannequin and lovingly pulls out each sleeve and lays his head on them, as if he were savoring his last moments with her. He wraps both sleeves around his body and seems to be changing his mind. However, he rushes forward and his face changes from a loving sadness to anger and his movements become more violent and militaristic. He punches the fist of one hand into the palm of the other and hits himself in the face to snap himself out of the trance he was in, and runs back to the robe. He faces the robe, which is facing upstage, and with one hand in a fist up in the air he uses the other to unbutton the collar. He then runs around to the back and slashes at the back of the robe to represent stab wounds. He rips the robe off of the mannequin and cradles it in his arms. At this point, the music stops, and he stares at the robe, rocking back and forth in a wide stance, as if in shock over what he has done, and he lays the robe gently on the ground.

### Woyicaike's Death

Woyzeck's death is a quiet and intimate moment. According to Peschke, the depiction of his death was inspired by the image of Oedipus Rex blinding himself with Jocasta's hairpins.<sup>287</sup> After killing Marie, Woyicaike walks to the vanity and draws his hands through some black grease paint, which is often used in *jingju* makeup application. He raises his hands in the air and drags them across his cheeks, starting at his eyes. He draws three black lines across his face on each side, and crawls on the floor to a lit square upstage left. Then Woyicaike lies very quietly in the square and the lights go to black. This type of quiet ending is not normal for a *jingju* production, but, in my opinion, it did work in this experimental production with *jingju* elements and was a perfectly reasonable way to end the play. It allowed the actor to spend some quiet moments with his character and provided the audience with a sense of release and exhalation as

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<sup>287</sup> Peschke "Interview" March 2016.

the play ends.

### Music

#### Instrumental

In keeping with the experimental nature of the production, the music was created by a German composer, Michael Weilacher. He is experienced in working with dancers and with musical improvisation and used a combination of elements from *jingju* and Western music composition, including a drum set, some stringed instruments, and a tree trunk. To blend *jingju* musical elements with Western musical elements, Weilacher followed two different methodologies: in one, he watched videos of rehearsals and prepared some pieces of the score; in the other, he improvised musical reactions to the actor's movements, which Zhang described.

We performed twice and each time we used “foreign” musicians who were strong improvisers. For example, we had a percussionist named Michael Weilacher who could create music using anything he could hit. So, he could play a simple piece of wood, creating music by drumming at different locations on the wood. Or he could use different kinds of hammers and beat on drums to create different kinds of sounds. For example, he could imitate the sound of someone knocking on a door or he could drag drumsticks across the surface of a drum to create the sound of someone opening a door. So he didn’t just provide accompaniment, he also created sound effects that the audience could understand. So, the performance had a spontaneous character.<sup>288</sup>

The closest the composer got to a traditional *jingju* play is in the percussion, which is especially prevalent in military *jingju* plays. Given that *Woyicaike* revolves primarily around soldiers, it is fitting that the percussion dominates. And much as the drum-playing conductor does in *jingju*, the composer accents each movement that Zhang performs. At the same time, however, because the composer had no training in *jingju* music, certain details such as specific rhythms and metrical types are difficult to discern. For the most part, the composer stays within a

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<sup>288</sup> Zhang “Interview” May 2016.

*xipi*-esque mode, using energetic rhythmic patterns. It is only at the moment when Marie appears and when she dies that he switches to a *erhuang*-esque mode, using slower rhythmic patterns, to create that atmosphere of gentleness and sadness respectively (Fig 34).



Fig 34: Michael Weilacher creating the music

### Vocal

The Song Skill, while severely lessened in this production, is still present in the form of two arias, the first sung by the Drum Major, and the second by Marie. Both arias are sung *a capella*, with the Drum Major's aria signifying his pride and arrogance; and Marie's questioning her life. The Singing Skill, used when words alone are insufficient to express the thoughts and feelings of a character, is not one of the major skills of a *wusheng*. However, it is a skill that *wusheng* actors have to learn. In terms of character, having the Drum Major us Song while in the process of seducing Marie gives him another way to show himself off to her. Marie, on the other hand, was conceived of as a *qingyi* character, meaning that Song Skill should be the major skill used in her portrayal. That Marie is singing the aria right before her death is significant because, on one level, it suggests something to the audience about basic *jingju* conventions, which is that Song Skill is used when words alone fail a character, and music can then help to express their inner most thoughts. At the same time, since Song Skill is the main skill of the *qingyi*, and Marie

is portrayed in that role category, in this play Marie is the character who is most likely to sing, and therefore to show deep inner thought and feelings. By questioning her relationship with Woyzeck and imagining what her life would be like with the Drum Major, Marie is established as the one character with real self-awareness. The specific placement of the aria, right before her death, shows that the last, and only vocalized, thoughts in Marie's mind is of what her life could have been without Woyzeck, her unquestioning, unaware other half.

Both Marie and the Drum Major sing a capella, which is not normally used in *jingju* performances. Traditionally, *jingju* performers sing arias accompanied by a *jinghu* and an *erhu*, both spiked fiddles and mainstays in a *jingju* orchestra. However, because the orchestra for this production was primarily made up of percussion instruments, the actor had to find different ways to bring the Song Skill into this production. Through a *capella* singing and *shuban* recitation, the actor was able to ensure that all Four Skills were a part of this production, even though movement played a dominant role.

The Doctor, as a *chou* character, is given the task of providing exposition using *shuban*, rhythmic recitation to percussion accompaniment. In this case, he gives exposition about himself and the experiment that he is conducting on Woyicaike. The *shuban*, as mentioned in previous chapters, is performed only by *chou* characters. For this particular production, the audience is unable to understand what the character is saying, so the *shuban* is valuable primarily for its sound quality and energy, while also exposing audiences to one more of the many types of vocal performance that can be included in a *jingju* production for different role categories.

### **Set, Costumes, and Makeup**

Because this production was smaller than those discussed in previous chapters, and required a more intimate setting, the set was kept very simple. There is a carpet on the floor



marking the playing space. Scattered around the carpet are the mannequins, to which the actor walks when it is time to feature that particular character. The vanity table which the actor uses to change into Marie is placed at stage right; the orchestra sits stage left, the traditional position in modern times.

The bareness of the stage allows the actor to move freely, a basic requirement for a play that makes dance-acting the priority. This is also in keeping with traditional *jingju* staging, which had little to no stage dressing, making the performer and his or her skills the focus of attention. In the case of *Woyicaike*, the almost bare stage further focuses the attention of the audience on an actor who demonstrates an extraordinary amount of skill in playing 5 characters, both male and female.

Much like the set, the costumes and makeup were also quite simple. As *Woyicaike*, the actor wore a white shirt, black pants, black soft sole boots typical of a *wusheng*, and the padded vest described above. This costume provided a base over which the actor could wear pieces of other costumes, while also playing its own role as *Woyicaike*'s costume. Throughout the play, as indicated above, the actor would put on pieces of costume depending on which character was featured at that particular moment. Once he was done with that particular character, the costume piece went back on its mannequin and was not used for the rest of the production. Each costume piece was indicative of the character's role category: The Captain had a yellow *kao* (靠), or stage armor, a skirt, and a beard; the Doctor had a *pi* (帔), or a formal robe,<sup>289</sup> a cloth cap, and a string of beads; the Drum Major had a red robe; and Marie had a blue *nüpi* (女帔), or female formal robe,<sup>290</sup> shoes, and the base of the headdress made up of a *wangzi*, or skullcap and the

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<sup>289</sup> Bonds 3.

<sup>290</sup> Bonds 9.

*xian lianzi*, or the long ponytail that falls down the actor's back.<sup>291</sup>

The simplicity of the costumes was arrived at through a compromise between Zhang and Peschke. Originally, Peschke had wanted a complete transformation for each character, meaning that Zhang would change costumes and makeup before each scene, because she felt that the process was beautiful. However, Zhang believed that while the audience would have been interested in it the first time, to do it continuously throughout the production would become "old and tedious,"<sup>292</sup> and that the performances as each character would have to become shorter because so much time would be spent on changing costume.

Zhang suggested using only certain costume pieces, so that he would indeed be able to show the audience how costume pieces are put on the body, while not wasting too much time. There is no makeup used, the only exception being the black grease paint at the end of the play. In terms of makeup as well as setting, audience attention was thereby focused on the performance of the actor.

### **Conclusion**

*Woyicaike* presented an interesting challenge to Zhang and Peschke: how to work across international lines to present a production that kept the integrity of both Büchner's original play and *jingju*. The creative team tried to not lead audience members to specific expectations as to what the performance could be. The final decision was to significantly reduce the presence of two of the Four Skills, Speech and Song, and to rely mainly on Dance-Acting and Combat. Not only did this allow all audiences to understand the production, but it also provided Zhang Ming with a couple of challenges: 1) providing enough detailed movement so that audiences understood

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<sup>291</sup> Bonds 218.

<sup>292</sup> Zhang "Interview" May 2016.

the plot; 2) explaining *jingju* conventions to Peschke, who read about *jingju*, but lacked practical knowledge and experience.

From the German, or domestic, point of view, I believe *Woyicaike* would lie between Relationship Six, for which Carlson says “foreign elements remain foreign, used within familiar structures for *verfremdung*, or shock value,”<sup>293</sup> and Relationship Seven, for which “an entire performance from another culture is imported or re-created with no attempts to accommodate it to the familiar.”<sup>294</sup>

The international adaptation and creative process prevented this particular performance from aligning with a single one of the Carlson’s Seven Relationships and depending on which group an audience member fell in, they would have a completely different view of how successful *Woyicaike* was. In my opinion, this performance leans more towards level seven, but there are some accommodations that the Creative team did make in order for this performance to resonate with audiences who did not speak Chinese or understand *jingju*.

German audience members had an overall positive reaction. Peschke says she was originally worried that most audience members would believe they had seen an actual *jingju*, without understanding that this was in fact an experimental piece with *jingju* elements.<sup>295</sup> However, judging by their reviews German critics did understand that *Woyicaike* was “not an exotically motivated spectacle about cultural escapism, but was a mutual cultural transfer.”<sup>296</sup> Instead of viewing *Woyicaike* as a mixture of two conflicting theatre forms that alternately seemed to dominate one another, this performance, under the umbrella of “experimental,” actually allows for both German and Chinese audiences to accept the performance,

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<sup>293</sup> Carlson 83

<sup>294</sup> Carlson 83

<sup>295</sup> Carlson 83; Peschke “Interview” April 2016.

<sup>296</sup> *Woyicake* Review.

understanding that it is neither completely Western or completely Chinese.

The Chinese audience members who saw it in Frankfurt and China, for the most part, were young, so their exposure to traditional *jingju* would have been limited. In conversations with Chinese college students in Beijing and Shanghai, I've found that in general they do not like traditional *jingju* productions as much, so that seeing an experimental piece, is more exciting, even if it does involve *jingju*. However, despite their young age and lack of interest in *jingju*, the young Chinese audience members, according to Peschke, like their German counterparts, also understood that this performance was not a traditional *jingju*,<sup>297</sup> which was echoed in a Chinese advertisement for a 2013 performance of the play in that country, stating that

The successful 2012 performance of *Woyicaike* in Frankfurt, Germany proved that audiences with different cultural backgrounds and no knowledge of *jingju* can understand the expression of the *jingju* body and posture.”<sup>298</sup>

For both Zhang and Peschke, there was a major learning curve in how to work together and how to explore what could and could not be done. Zhang expanded on this in our interview

We each had our own work style, so in the beginning, there was some adjustment. Sometimes our approaches would be very different and we wouldn't talk to each other and then we'd get stuck. Or, we'd get into big arguments. Gradually, though, we came to understand each other better... We came to realize that you had to understand what the other person was trying to accomplish.<sup>299</sup>

Often times, Zhang noted, he came to agree with Peschke's way of doing things and it all came down to their willingness to try new ideas and create what was best for the production and the story.<sup>300</sup>

The collaboration between a German director and a Chinese actor is, in my opinion, a valuable step in the revitalization of *jingju* as China's National Theatre Form. The artistic choice

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<sup>297</sup> Peschke “Interview” 2016

<sup>298</sup> *Woyicaike* Review

<sup>299</sup> Zhang “Interview” May 2016.

<sup>300</sup> Zhang “Interview” May 2016.

to focus primarily on Dance-Acting and Combat Skills provided solutions to obstacles created by Speech and Song because of the inherent language barrier between Zhang, the audience, and Peschke.

## CHAPTER 6: *FUSHIDE* (浮士德 *FAUST*) (2015 AND 2016)

### Introduction

Goethe's *Faust Part I* (浮士德 *Fushide*) is another product of international cooperation, this time between Anna Peschke, the National China *Jingju* Company (NCJC) in Beijing, and the Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione (ERTF) in Italy. As opposed to *Woyicaike*, which Peschke also directed, *Fushide* was not a side project for the *jingju* actors involved. Instead, *Fushide* was an actual part of the NCJC official 2016-2017 season and opened up its own series of obstacles, created by opposing viewpoints and the question of how NCJC would be represented on stage with this new and experimental production.

Goethe and *Faust* have been in China since the 1800s and has since seen numerous *huaju* and film adaptations. Antje Budde and Li Xia both point out that there have not been a single *xiqu* adaptation of *Faust*<sup>301</sup> and Budde states that there are very few female directors of *Faust* adaptations in general.<sup>302</sup> Anna Peschke, in directing the NCJC and ERTF production of an experimental *jingju* has directed the first *xiqu* adaptation of *Faust*, and has increased the number of female directors of *Faust* by one.

The adaptation process of this particular piece was especially tricky because both Peschke and the *jingju* company had to learn how to work together, despite their very strong opinions about how things should be done. Peschke, through her experience on *Woyicaike*, had gained a deeper understanding of *jingju* than she had initially during the creative process of *Woyicaike*. However, she had never worked with an established *jingju* company and both sides

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<sup>301</sup> Since the *Faust I and II*, *Bootleg Faust*, and *Fushide* debuted, there have been two *jingju* performances of *Fushide*: one produced by the Shanghai Theatre Academy as a *xiandai jingju* (现代京剧 contemporary *jingju*) performance in 2018 and another produced by the Contemporary Legend Theatre (当代传奇剧场) based in Taipei, Taiwan in 2017.

<sup>302</sup> Budde 196

had to quickly reconcile their own images of how *Fushide* should be adapted and performed. Compromises had to be made in order to create a performance that was to the satisfaction of everyone involved.

Like the other case studies in this dissertation, the bulk of my analysis comes from a video recording, this one sent to me by Anna Peschke. However, I was also able to see this production twice in Beijing -- once at Xinghua University and again at the Mei Lanfang Grand Theatre. I will be discussing both of these performances, specifically focusing on the audience, later on in the chapter.

### *Faust: The Legend*

Since his death, Dr. Johann Georg Faust (1480-1540) has become the protagonist of his own legend. His reported bluntness about his disbelief in God and in Jesus' miracles would have left those around him in horror, especially in a period of such religious fervor as 16<sup>th</sup> century Germany. In 1587, a German book appeared entitled "*Historia of Dr. Johann Faust, the widely acclaimed magician and black artist, how he pledged himself to the devil for a certain time, what strange adventures he saw meanwhile, brought about and pursued, until he finally received his well-deserved wages. Compiled and prepared for the printer in several parts out of his own literary remains, as a horrible example and sincere warning for all conceited, clever, and godless people. James 4: Submit to Gratia et Privilegio. Printed in Frankfurt am Main by Johann Spies. MDLXXXVII.*"<sup>303</sup>

By the late 1500s, the Faust Legend made its way to England where Christopher Marlowe, one of the Elizabethan period's best playwrights, wrote his *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, where he kept the moral presented in the German version, but heightened the character

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<sup>303</sup> Kaufmann 14

of Faust through poetry. Theatre troupes toured the play to Germany where they became very popular and were further adapted into comedies and puppet shows, which Goethe had seen as a young man.<sup>304</sup>

### Goethe (1749-1832)

Johann Wolfgang Goethe first encountered the legend of Faust as a child.<sup>305</sup> As an adult, he spent almost thirty years writing his own version of the *Faust* legend.<sup>306</sup> Goethe wrote *Urfaust* (*Original Faust*) and *Faust Part One* in three phases that spanned thirty years: 1772-1775,<sup>307</sup> 1778-1790,<sup>308</sup> and then 1797-1801.<sup>309</sup> Goethe started *Faust Part Two* twenty years after *Faust Part One* was published in 1808<sup>310</sup> and it was not published until after his death in 1832.<sup>311</sup> As the dates of each phase indicates, Goethe had written each phase during different parts of his life, which, understandably, influenced his view not only his impression of the Faust Legend but also how his versions of the characters were going to function within his play.

Goethe started writing *Urfaust* in 1772 and finished *Faust, Part One* in 1801. As Fairly Baker writes, it is impossible to know in which order Goethe wrote these scenes, but it is clear that whatever was happening in Goethe's life during each phase influenced how he depicted his characters.<sup>312</sup> The First Phrase is characterized by Goethe's influence during and by the *Sturm und Drang* period of German literature and the philosopher Rousseau who advocated for a return to a naturally simple life to a point where social hierarchy is no longer necessary because

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<sup>304</sup> Luke lxii

<sup>305</sup> Luke xiv

<sup>306</sup> Luke xi

<sup>307</sup> Luke xi

<sup>308</sup> Luke xxiv-xxv

<sup>309</sup> Luke xxvi

<sup>310</sup> Luke, xli

<sup>311</sup> Kaufmann 5-7

<sup>312</sup> Baker 13



civilization was impeding the release of humanity's innate goodness.<sup>313</sup> Goethe, as a young author, latched on to Rousseau's philosophy, taking up the study of folklore, folk legends, and the occult. His incorporation of Gretchen, the simple natural girl who sings a folk song at her entrance and entrancing Faust, is his nod to both Rousseau and Shakespeare, whose epic plays and use of nature and folk tales also drew Goethe's attention.

Goethe, during this phase, also attempted to distance his story from the established Christian reading of the Faust Legend that had been present in Christopher Marlowe's version of the story. In these attempts, Goethe made Mephistopheles an Earth Spirit<sup>314</sup> that did not have any previous allegiance to Heaven but held the destructive and dangerous power of nature. However, finding this idea difficult to develop and finding the Christian angle hard to resist, Goethe returned to the idea of Mephistopheles as a demon sent to tempt Faust.<sup>315</sup>

The Second Phase of writing took place during the years of 1778-1790. In the intervening years between the end of *Faust* Phase One and the beginning of *Faust* Phase Two, Goethe traveled to Weimar, where he became a public official.<sup>316</sup> By 1778, Goethe felt that he needed a rest and traveled to Italy where he wrote more of the *Faust* adaptation. In this phase, Faust, like Goethe, was in a state of transition. Influenced by the artwork and sculptures that he saw around him in Italy, Faust became less of an impression and more solid and heightened as a character. Meanwhile the magical and folkloric influences that dominated Phase One fell more to the background as Goethe concentrated on the characters themselves.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Hobson 2

<sup>314</sup> Luke xvi

<sup>315</sup> Luke xvii

<sup>316</sup> Kaufmann 5

<sup>317</sup> Luke xxv

The Third Phase was written after his return from Italy from 1797-1801. In this phase, Goethe gives more body and lays more emphasis on the conflict of the story: the debate between good and evil, which is one of the main elements of *Faust*. It is almost as if Goethe, as he grew older, was trying to reconcile all of the elements that went into his magnum opus under the umbrella of temptation and whether or not human nature is strong enough to stand up to the sort of temptation that Mephistopheles makes available. However, the interest in the magical and occult is not completely gone as this is the phase where Goethe wrote the famous Walpurgis Night, a scene where Faust and Mephistopheles, having escaped Gretchen's hometown after killing her brother, land at the summit of the Harz Mountains. Here Faust experiences witch ceremonies and a celebration held in honor of Mephistopheles' Lord Mammon. Near the end of the scene, Faust sees a vision of Gretchen.

FAUST.        Mephisto, look! Right over there:  
                  A young girl stands, so pale, so fair.  
                  All by herself! How slowly she moves now,  
                  As if her feet were fastened somehow!  
                  And as I look, it seems to me  
                  It's poor dear Gretchen that I see.<sup>318</sup>

In seeing Gretchen in her misery, Goethe gives Faust some remorse at what he has done to her for the vanity of being young once more and it takes a magical event, such as the Walpurgis Night at the Walpurgis Night Dream for Faust, who has spent the night amongst demons, to truly understand the dichotomy of good and evil.

### Faust in China

*Faust* has had a long history in China not just as an example of Western literary masterpiece, but also as a conduit through which academics and artists could examine China's position in the world. In a chapter focused on Asian adaptations of *Faust* from the book entitled *International*

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<sup>318</sup> Luke 132

*Faust Studies: Adaptation, Reception, and Translation* edited by Lorna Fitzsimmons, Antje Budde, a German and Chinese scholar, writes that China's exposure to Goethe took place through three separate avenues.<sup>319</sup> The first was through the diaries of a Chinese Ambassador to Germany, Li Fengbao (离风暴 1834-1887), who first encountered Goethe at the funeral of an American diplomat who admired the author<sup>320</sup>. At a time when the balance of power between the east and west was heavily skewed in favor of the West, Li, through his discovery of Goethe, set out to discover why this was so. Li was also fascinated by Goethe's position as a poet and a statesman, which "conformed to the concept of what an ideal Confucianist scholar-official in a traditional sense was all about."<sup>321</sup> In recent decades, Goethe and Confucius have come to symbolize cultural and educational outreach for their respective governments, and Budde notes that both men are now used as tools to promote culture and international relations through the arts. As China has the Confucius Institute, Germany as the Goethe Institute, an international organization that

promote[s] knowledge of the German language abroad and foster international cultural cooperation. We convey a comprehensive image of Germany by providing information about cultural, social and political life in our nation. Our cultural and educational programs encourage intercultural dialogue and enable cultural involvement. They strengthen the development of structures in civil society and foster worldwide mobility.<sup>322</sup>

The second avenue through which Goethe entered China were the translations of *Faust* and *Werther* that were brought to China via Japan. When Commodore Perry forced Japan to open to the Western world in 1854, the new Emperor Meiji declared a complete modernization

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<sup>319</sup> Budde 178.

<sup>320</sup> Budde 178

<sup>321</sup> Budde 178

<sup>322</sup> Goethe Institute

of Japan. As a part of the modernization, Goethe was translated to Japanese; when Chinese exchange students came to study in Japan during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>323</sup> they were introduced to Goethe and his work, which became a part of the foundation of their desire to modernize China. Beginning with Guo Moruo (郭沫若 1892-1978), Tian Han (田汉 1898-1968), and Zong Baihua (宗白华 1897-1986), who had been students in Japan and Germany, published discussions of Goethe's work in 1920 at a time when translations and a healthy discourse on Goethe's work began to flourish in literary circles.<sup>324</sup> Comparisons were also made between *Faust* and the Chinese literary masterpieces *Journey to the West* and *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which launched *Faust* into this category of International literature in the eyes of the Chinese public, instead of just another example of Western literature.<sup>325</sup>

Within the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there have been two notable *huaju*, or spoken drama, adaptations of *Faust*. The first was *Faust I and II* (1994) at the National Experimental Theatre in Beijing, directed by noted *huaju* director and head of the National Experimental Theatre, Lin Zhaohua (林赵华), and funded by the Goethe Institute. The second was *Bootleg Faust* (*Daoban Fushide*, 1999), written by Shen Lin, directed by Meng Jinghui, and performed in the Studio Theatre at the Beijing People's Art Theatre. This production was built around the theme of "bootlegging," which Xia Li describes in her article, "Faust made in China: Meng Jinghui and Shen Lin's irreverent socio-cultural deconstruction of Goethe's iconic masterpiece," as a reference not only to China's reputation as a major source for bootlegged products, but also to the fact that translations of Western literature and drama were also bootlegged from Japanese translations of

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<sup>323</sup> R. Li "Shashibiya" 23

<sup>324</sup> Budde 180.

<sup>325</sup> Budde 181.

the original texts.<sup>326</sup> Both of these productions will be briefly discussed in the next sections in order to set the scene for the *jingju* version of *Fushide*, showing that *Faust* has also had a long and prominent history on the Chinese *huaju* stage. With each production's national prominence and influence in *xiqu* and *huaju*, it was only logical that *Fushide* would make the leap from *huaju* to *jingju*, much like the Shakespeare adaptations of the 1980s.

#### Faust I and II (1994)

Antje Budde described Lin Zhaohua's production of *Faust I and II* as a "hybrid product that produces a genuine quality in itself. It is neither pure Goethe nor pure Lin, but both."<sup>327</sup> Within the two -and -half hour production, Lin, his co-director Ren Ming (任鸣), and dramaturg/translator Li Jianming (李建明) set out to create a version of *Faust* in which both parts would be equal in length and easily understandable. The latter task was harder because of the sheer amount of embedded symbolism and references to Western culture and religion. To get around this obstacle, the play was created to look like a picture book,<sup>328</sup> meaning that the production was made up of quick sketches, much like a picture book. Because this production was meant to act like an audience's first introduction to *Faust*, the references to mythology in *Part II* were cut out completely, with the exception of a shortened version of the Helena story, where Faust is sent out to judge a beauty contest between Hera, Helena, and Athena. As in a picture book, where the backgrounds are painted in solid colors, the set of *Faust I and II* was simple and industrial, allowing the audience to really focus on the story.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Li, X 510.

<sup>327</sup> Budde 187.

<sup>328</sup> Budde 190.

<sup>329</sup> Budde 191.

This production did not shy away from using and adapting *xiqu* conventions, especially in terms of space, props, and music. Spaces were transformed depending on the context of the scene, for instance by a bridge and a staircase that represented specific locations, such as Heaven and Hell. Smaller props were also used to further designate location; for example, a pillow that became representative of Gretchen's room. *Xiqu* is known for its live music and Lin used that concept, beginning the production with a live rock band that played on and off throughout the entire show, along with recorded music. However, unlike *xiqu*, neither the band nor the recorded music played through every moment, but music was still a force.

#### Bootleg Faust (1999)

The term “bootleg,” as mentioned above, carries a couple connotations. One, it is Meng's reference to China's reputation as a haven for bootleg materials, whether it be movies or designer purses. Two, it refers to the *Faust*'s long presence in China, which stems mainly from original Japanese translations of the play. For these reasons, “bootleg” becomes the main theme for Meng Jinghui's adaptation of *Faust*, which was set in the television industry in contemporary China.

In the late 1990s, television became a big draw for young Chinese who feel that traditional theatre is for the older generations. Tapping into that sentiment, Meng created a story around Fushide, now a contemporary economics professor at Wittenberg University, a reference to Goethe's time at the University, who has fallen on hard times. Tempted by Mephistopheles, a television producer, who promises to make Faust a lot of money, Faust meets Gretchen, a waitress in a bar, and in turn seduces her by telling her that he can make her rich and famous. After several rejections, Gretchen falls for his advances and the dream he has promised her and they sleep together. Gretchen dies after giving birth but is reincarnated in Part II as the narrator;

Faust becomes the chairman of the “Golden Apple Beauty Contest” and a judge for the contest between Hera, Aphrodite, and Helen.

As both Antje Budde and Xia Li have written, Meng Jinghui’s adaptation of *Faust* does not use any traditional theatre elements at all, which also speaks to the time in which Meng produced his play. Embracing the flashiness of Chinese television, including multimedia in his set, and presenting what Budde calls “a collage of music that ranged from rock to Greek choruses to French ballads, to Cantopop-techno,”<sup>330</sup> Meng showed that “there is really not much that is ‘holy’ with him – neither Chinese nor foreign/Western habits, institutions or myths and certainly not himself...always ready to challenge the (young, educated, and urban) audience.”<sup>331</sup>

### Overall Goal

Peschke chose *Faust* for because she felt that because *Faust* was a classic in German literature and *jingju* was China’s most well-known theatre form, the adaptation made sense. There were many obstacles in the adaptation and rehearsal process, which will be discussed in later sections. However, the result was indeed an experimental *jingju* production that gave Chinese audiences a new and different version of *Faust* which utilized traditional Chinese theatre and culture.

In our interviews, Peschke, Liu Dake, and Zhang Ming<sup>332</sup> all stressed the importance of demonstrating *jingju*’s potential as a vehicle for the adaptation of Western literature. This belief established the overall goal for *Fushide*, which was to show the flexibility and robustness of *jingju* in telling a non-Chinese story.<sup>333</sup> For this purpose the creative team utilized code-mixing

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<sup>330</sup> Budde 514.

<sup>331</sup> Budde 196

<sup>332</sup> This actor did not wish for his name to be mentioned in this dissertation.

<sup>333</sup> Peschke “Interview” April 2016.

to create a performance that not only provided an adaptation of *Faust* that would be experienced as faithful by Chinese and European audiences, but that also explored the boundaries of *jingju* and how far they could be pushed.

Much like *Woyicaike*, *Fushide* was labeled as an “experimental” *jingju* performance by the National China *Jingju* Company. While this was due to the mixture of *jingju* and Western theatre conventions, the label of “experimental” allows for more flexibility in creation and analysis. What I mean by this is that because of the sheer number of elements and influences that were included in the production, there are many angles from which to examine this production and it is not limited to a certain set of conventions and traditions.

The combining of different culturally specific theatrical conventions into one performance, became a major tool with which the creative team pursued their goal, especially when performing the magical elements. However, the utilization of different conventions and the creative team’s goal for the production began to fight against each other to some extent, because the production does not necessarily show that *jingju*, by itself, can present a story like *Faust*, but rather that the only way to perform *Faust* as a *jingju* is with the help of Western theatre conventions. My analysis of how the mixture of these conventions affected *jingju* convention was echoed by Liu Dake, the *hualian* actor who performed Faust. In response to my question about a specific moment in the show, he replied with “that’s *huaaju*!”<sup>334</sup> citing the Western inspired Chinese theatre form that was used in past adaptations of Western literature, as discussed above. In a way the use of Western theatre convention was unavoidable. Anna Peschke’s background is in Western theatre and although she had developed a deeper knowledge of *jingju* while working with Zhang Ming during *Woyicaike*, it is inevitable that she would bring in her own point of view to *Fushide*.

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<sup>334</sup> D. Liu “Interview” March, 2016.



## **Pre-Production**

### **The Idea**

After her collaboration with Zhang Ming on *Woyicaike*, Peschke met Pietro Valenti, the artistic director of the Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione, one of Italy's seven national theatres<sup>335</sup>. They met at a festival in Avignon where Peschke showed Valenti pictures and videos of *Woyicaike*. However, Valenti insisted on seeing the performance live. He and Peschke agreed to meet in Beijing at another performance of *Woyicaike*. After seeing the performance, Valenti became interested in a collaboration with not only Peschke, but also with the NCJC,<sup>336</sup> which both Liu Dake and Zhang Ming worked for at the time and believed was going to be a “slam dunk.”<sup>337</sup>

### **The Creative Team**

The creative team of *Fushide* was truly international. Directed by German director, Anna Peschke, produced by the National China *Jingju* Company (NCJC) in Beijing and the Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione (ERTF) in Italy, and performed by established *jingju* performers, this production was a lesson in cooperation and negotiation in order to create a performance that could satisfy all parties involved.

In order for a smooth creative process, each company took charge of specific parts of the production. The NCJC took charge of the actors, the costumes, vocal music, and script, while the ERTF were responsible for the choreography, lighting design, and atmospheric music. Meanwhile, Peschke, fresh from her own experiences with Zhang Ming in *Woyicaike* and in possession of a lot more knowledge about *jingju*, took charge of a production that she felt was a good match

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<sup>335</sup> Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione

<sup>336</sup> Peschke “Interview” April 2016.

<sup>337</sup> D. Liu “Interview” January 2016.

between Germany's Masterpiece and China's most famous theatre form.<sup>338</sup> Working with Peschke, as the *jingju daoyan* (京剧导演), or director,<sup>339</sup> was Xu Mengke, a *chou* actor who made sure that Peschke's vision and *jingju* convention would match. However, the relationship between Peschke and Xu proved to be rocky throughout the production, with each protecting their own visions of the production.<sup>340</sup> This relationship was indicative of Peschke's relationship with the NCJC, which she found to be a tough working relationship. From her point of view, Peschke, who had a certain vision of the play and the characters, would argue for certain elements that the NCJC, protective of *jingju*, would not agree to. This often resulted in long discussions, each side presenting their view and the NCJC conceding to Peschke's vision, examples of which we will see further on in the chapter.

Performing as Fushide was First-Rank *hualian* actor, Liu Dake. Performing opposite Liu as Mo Fei (Mephistopheles) was First-Rank *wusheng* actor, Zhang Ming. Both of these actors knew Peschke and she felt comfortable with them to cast them as the lead roles.

Two *dan* actors played Geleiqing (Gretchen). The first, Zhang Jiachun, is a First-ranked Xun *pai* actor, a student of performance teachings of Xun Huisheng, one of the Four Great *Dan*, who specialized in *huadan* and *huadan huashan* roles who were described as "jade daughters of humble homes (*xiaojia biyu*).<sup>341</sup> For personal reasons, Zhang could only perform Xinghua University in November of 2015, so she was replaced by Guo Jia, a *qingyi* actor who, at the time, was an MFA student at NACTA. Both actors, due to their specific role categories, brought out different elements of Geleiqing's character that made her more tragic than she already was.

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<sup>338</sup> Peschke "Interview" March 2016

<sup>339</sup> *Fushide* Playbill; *Oxford Chinese Dictionary* 153

<sup>340</sup> Peschke "Interview" March, 2016

<sup>341</sup> Goldstein 252.

Zhang brought to Geleiqing, a youthfulness that Goethe had written about in his original play. On the other hand, Guo, as a *qingyi*, brought the high emotion which emphasized the tragic nature of the character.

Rounding out the cast was Xu Mengke, the *jingju daoyan*, who is a First-Rank *chou* actor who played Hualunting (Valentine), Geileiqing's brother who is killed in the first half of the play. Following the general convention, the *chou* character is often the smallest role in a play and because of Xu's role as the *jingju* director, he was understood that his role in the play itself would be smaller.

Artistically, the rest of the creative team, with the exception of adapting the script, paired off into groups all of which included both Chinese and Italian input. This created opportunities for each team to learn from each other for a truly intercultural and international creative process.

In order to adapt Goethe's massive poem to *jingju*, the NCJC assigned Li Meini to write the script. A graduate from NACTA with both a Bachelor's and a Master's Degrees in playwriting. While adapting the script, Li was responsible for making sure that Goethe's original play and the Faust Legend were well represented within the conventions of *jingju* and that this production, from the point of view of the story, would appeal to all audiences. As a result, several important scenes were cut in order to fit within *jingju* plot conventions. These cuts will be discussed later in the chapter.

Creating the mystical world of the play fell not only to Peschke and Xu, but to composers Chen Xiaoman who concentrated on the vocal music along with Luigi Ceccarelli and Alessandro Cipriani who both focused on the atmospheric music. Chen had graduated with an MFA in music composition from NACTA, while Ceccarelli majored in electronic music from the Conservatorio Gioacchino Rossini di Pesaro. Cipriani majored in composition and electronic music from the

Roema Conservatory of music.<sup>342</sup> All three composers focused on creating music that would seamlessly meld *jingju* and electronic music together to create a musical version of *Fushide*, which embodied the mystical and magical dual natures of the original story, and could still be seen as *jingju*.

To capture the magic and mystical *mise en scene* of the play, the design team, including lighting designer Tommaso Checcucci, set designer Ni Ke, and costume designer A Kuan worked together to create designs that not only fused Eastern and Western sensibilities but also old and new theatrical techniques. In lighting and set design, Checcucci and Ni created a set and lighting design that established the play in Ancient China and kept to *jingju* convention of a sparse set paired with a simple lighting design with broad washes of light. When a magical event occurred, Checcucci took advantage of modern lighting techniques, like strobe lights, to make sure that these moments stood out.

Costume designer, A Kuan, who had graduated from the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology, made sure to create a fusion of traditional lines and shapes in his costume, while also using modern dyeing techniques, including the ombre technique. Liu Dake mentioned in our interview that A Kuan, who had designed all of the costumes for the Opening Ceremonies for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, made sure to incorporate input from the actors on how the costumes moved and affected the actors' movements.<sup>343</sup> In total, the Creative team for *Fushide* well represented all parties involved in the adaptation process, which "opened up a new model for the creation and cooperation of Chinese and foreign theater programs."<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> *Fushide* Program, 2015, 2016

<sup>343</sup> D. Liu, "Interview" January 2016

<sup>344</sup> J. Guo 4

## **Conventions Used and Adapted**

### **Creating the Script**

As stated in the introduction, *Jingju* plays frequently revolve around familiar characters and familiar stories and in adapting *Faust, Part One*, which is over 4600 lines long, Li Meini chose to focus on the most well-known episode of the piece: The Gretchen Tragedy. I believe that there are several reasons why Li chose to focus on this particular episode. First, it is the episode that people, who might not even be familiar with the legend or Goethe's play, would know. Dr. Farley Baker believes that the reason why readers and writers are so consumed by Gretchen and her story is because she and is not hindered by Goethe's philosophical base. However, I would argue that she is directly linked to Goethe's Rousseau-adapted philosophy that 18<sup>th</sup> century literature should go back to a simpler time and back to nature. The desire to go back to nature and the simple life inspired Goethe and many of his colleagues to view Shakespeare as the ultimate poet: the one who could incorporate human nature and nature to create soaring epics and romances.<sup>345</sup>

Another reason, which is probably the one that hit closest to home for Goethe, who was a practicing lawyer at the time, was the case of Susanna Margaretha Brandt, a young and uneducated woman who slept with a travelling goldsmith because she was possessed by the Devil and had taken drugs. She gave birth to his baby and killed it in order to save her reputation. Convicted of infanticide, the woman was incarcerated in a prison 200 yards away from Goethe home and many of his family members were involved in the case. This kind of episode, especially when it affected a large number of his family, would have stuck in Goethe's memory.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Luke, David. *Intro*

<sup>346</sup> Luke, David. *Goethe's Faust, Part One*, xix

Gretchen's story is a very human story, one that "makes its own demands and takes possession of us, so that we read it as a thing existing in its own right with little or no thought of Faust's wager or anything else."<sup>347</sup> Li, understandably, latched on to the "Gretchen Tragedy" as the main focus of the production. With her focus on this particular episode and the emotional trajectory of her main characters (Fushide, Mo Fei, and Geleiqing), Li removed scenes that did not emotionally apply to those characters and added scenes that would increase the emotional stakes for both the characters and the audiences. To this end, Li removed "Scene 8: Auerbach's Tavern in Leipzig" and "Scene 24: The Walpurgis Night," although Li does make reference to both of these scenes. After Hualunting (Valentine) returns home and praises Geleiqing for taking good care of the house while he has been away, he is called away to the bar to drink with his friends. This is when Fushide and Mo Fei take advantage of his absence to gain access to Geleiqing, thus starting all of the drama.

David Luke points out that the Walpurgis Night scene is a placeholder for Gretchen's pregnancy, infanticide, and arrest.<sup>348</sup> Instead of presenting the Walpurgis Night in *Fushide*, Li focuses her attention onto Geleiqing's descent into madness as well as the act of killing her baby. Li does make reference to the Walpurgis Night Scene, writing a combination of that scene and Scene 23: The Cathedral, in which Gretchen mourns for her mother and brother. In *Fushide*, Li creates a sequence that references Walpurgis Night, with neighbors coming out on stage wearing Chinese demon masks and taunting Geleiqing and her baby, signifying her madness and the disappearance of her reputation.

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<sup>347</sup> Fairly 46.

<sup>348</sup> Luke xxxix

## Role Categories

### Fushide (浮士德 Faust)

Fushide's journey is broken up into three sections, each allotted to a different male role category. The first is a *laosheng*, specifically a scholar who has spent his entire life studying and reading his books. He regrets not having found love in another human being, but only in his books. Mo Fei (Mephistopheles) comes to him and tells him that he has a solution to his problem, which is that he could, with the help of a magical potion, become young again and find the love he missed. Mo Fei's potion turns Fushide back into a young man, specifically a *xiaosheng*. It is as a *xiaosheng* that Fushide spends a majority of the play, and it is as a *xiaosheng* that Fushide meets and seduces Gretchen and kills her brother, Valentine, and her mother. The third and final section shows Fushide showing regret and realizing what he has done while under Mephistopheles's control. As Mo Fei begins to gain more control over him, Fushide begins to adapt the characteristics of a *hualian*. His facial expressions become bigger and his voice becomes more concentrated in his chest, a specific characteristic of a *hualian* (Fig 35).



Fig 35: Fushide as a *laosheng*

Mo Fei (魔非 Mephistopheles)

Peschke's image of Mo Fei was born not only out of her previous collaboration with Zhang Ming, but also from his performance of Sun Wukong, the Monkey King.<sup>349</sup> Sun Wukong, is a classic character in Chinese literature, famous for his cunning and ingenuity, using magic to help him get out of tricky situations. After wreaking havoc in Heaven, Sun Wukong is tasked with the protection of a Buddhist Monk on his journey to India to bring the scriptures to China. Along the way, Sun Wukong and the Monk gain two more disciples: Pigsy and Friar Sand. Together, the three disciples fight demons and monsters who wish to prevent them from reaching India. The adventures of the Four Pilgrims are popular subjects not only in *jingju* productions, but throughout Chinese popular culture. It was these qualities that sparked the development of Mo Fei's character in Peschke's mind and also what made her want to use Zhang Ming in this role.

Peschke's original image of a *sheng*, as an elegant gentleman character who possessed magic, did not fit with the NCJC's original image of Mo Fei, whom they thought should have been cast as a *chou*. They believed Mo Fei was a demon, which are traditionally performed by *chou* characters. Peschke, however, argued that a *chou* would cause the audience to laugh and not take Mo Fei seriously as the overall manipulator. As a *wusheng* character and a gentleman, Mo Fei is much more on Fushide's level and more dangerously alluring.

Peschke's image of Mo Fei does have precedent in past *huaju* adaptations of *Faust*. In *Faust Parts I and II*, Lin Zhaohua's Mo Fei was played by a woman who wore a black shirt, black pants, and a dark military-esque long coat<sup>350</sup>, creating an elegant silhouette. Meng Jinghui also developed an elegant gentleman for the characterization of Mo Fei by making him the

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<sup>349</sup> Peschke, "Interview" April 2016.

<sup>350</sup> Budde 192.



chairman of the television company. So, while these productions are not *jingju* and do not have set conventions to adhere to, the image of Mo Fei as an elegant gentleman would not be unfamiliar to Chinese audiences. In the end, the NCJC relented to Peschke's image and characterization of Mo Fei (Fig 36).



Fig 36: Mo Fei

### Geleiqing (格雷卿 Gretchen)

Presenting a tragic figure like Geleiqing is not unusual in *jingju*. Over the years, there have numerous tragic heroines, many of them created by Cheng Yanqiu (1904-1958), the youngest of the Four Great *Dan*. He created a number of tragic works, in which his heroines “denounced the sufferings caused by tyrants and wars, and eulogized the strength demonstrated by the weakest in society. These were his heroines who showed their ‘fighting spirit’ through their deaths.”<sup>351</sup> In order to create the *dan* character he wanted to portray, Cheng chose to “fuse” characteristics of the *huashan* role category with other characteristics from outside of *jingju*. The

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<sup>351</sup> R. Li “*Soul*” 104.

*Fushide* creative team emphasized Geleiqing's innocence and tragic down fall by creating a *huashan* role out of a *huadan*, a *guimendan*, and a *qingyi*. This combination allowed the creative team to portray a character who is very well established in both the West and China, while also cementing her into *jingju* convention.

In performing this role, I observed that Zhang was able to combine Cheng and Xun *pai* styles in order to create a character that seamlessly combined the youth of a *huadan* and the maturity of a *qingyi* (Fig 37).



Fig 37: Geleiqing

### Hualunting (华伦廷 Valentine)

Gretchen's brother, Valentine, is a soldier, only appears in one scene in Goethe's play. Because he is not very well developed in the original play, creating the *jingju* version of this character was not difficult. Taking their clues from Goethe, the creative team cast Hualunting as a *wusheng*, a soldier. According to Peschke, the creative team developed this character just enough to create a fully rounded character, but did not spend as much time as they did with

Fushide, Mo Fei, and Geleiqing.<sup>352</sup> The audience saw him first as soldier, who, at the moment he sees Geleiqing, tries to cheer her up by playing hand games as if they were children again. It is also clear that he protects his family honor and image by praising the way Geleiqing has run the household while he was away and then curses her for being a “disgraceful woman”<sup>353</sup> as he dies (Fig 38).



Fig 38: Hualunting

### Dance-Acting

### Prologue

The prologue of *Fushide* establishes the *mise en scene* of the production as well as the exposition. The scene focuses on Mo Fei and his conversation with God, whose voice is heard over a stereo system. As the lights go up on the stage and the curtain parts, the audience sees Zhang Ming as Mo Fei already in place at the back of the stage, unusual blocking for the opening of a *jingju* play. Characters are typically preceded by a vocal or aural cue first before entering from between the second and third wing to the accompaniment of a percussion pattern, so to

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<sup>352</sup> Peschke “Interview” March 2016.

<sup>353</sup> M. Li, *Fushide* Script 23.

already have an actor far upstage when the play opens tells the audience that this character, and the play, will not follow traditional *jingju* conventions.

Mo Fei, dressed in a gray robe and cape with pheasant feathers attached to a headdress designed to look like a red-tipped mohawk, moves around the stage performing martial movements. The orchestra, made up of both *jingju* and Western instruments, accompanies him, which is typical. What is atypical is that the *jingju* orchestra speaks the percussion beats *a capella*, rather than playing them. This is normally done in rehearsals, not in performance, and by actors, not musicians. Actors often speak the percussion patterns themselves to get the patterns ingrained in their bodies, but the practice is very rare in actual performance,<sup>354</sup> so the execution of *a capella* percussion would have been jarring to audiences who were familiar with *jingju*, thus emphasizing the strangeness of the character and the play itself.

Zhang Ming, as Mo Fei, performs a series of martial movements, shaking his head to move the two pheasant feathers attached to his red-tipped mohawked hair. As Zhang kicks and moves his way around the stage, he flips the edges of his cape around his arms to resemble water sleeves, a costume element that is generally not used for *wusheng* because they have to perform combat. However, because Mo Fei is also, as Peschke called him, a gentleman or, in *jingju* terms, a *wensheng*, or civil male role, water sleeves become a necessary part of the costume.

The prologue is centered on Mephistopheles and his bet with God. In order to portray God, a figure that is very Western in origin, another actor used a microphone to speak to Mo Fei from off stage. For the entire conversation, Mephistopheles is confident that he is going to win,

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<sup>354</sup> In 2005, Wu Hsing-kuo, artistic director of the Contemporary Legend Theatre in Taiwan, performed an adaptation of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* as an experimental *jingju*. Due to the famously strict regulations of the Beckett Estate regarding adaptations of his plays, music is not allowed in any performances. However, because one of the main tenants of *jingju* is music, Wu and his fellow actor got around this obstacle by speaking all of the necessary percussion *a capella* in order not only to adhere to *jingju* convention, but also to obey the regulations of the Beckett Estate.

which is seen in his body language, specifically in the way Zhang uses the Five Canons: mouth, hands, eyes, body, and steps. He listens to God with his head cocked upward and his eyes looking downward, projecting a sense of haughty confidence as he states that “in this materialistic world of myriad temptation, I find self-discipline and self-cultivation hardly possible.”<sup>355</sup>

The lights come up on Fushide’s desk and as Mephistopheles turns to face it, he lets out an excited squeal, which is when the audience first sees the Sun Wukong influence on the character. He runs behind the desk, and looks through Fushide’s books, declaring that “knowledgeable as he is, he has never experienced the sensual pleasures of the world. Now he is just a grey-haired man with a bent back and blurred eyes under the dim light in a shabby house. How lamentable! How pathetic!”<sup>356</sup> As he speaks the second line, Mo Fei walks out from behind the desk and imitates an old man with a bent over back using a cane. This type of mischievous behavior is inspired by Sun Wukong, who is known for his playful and mischievous behaviors.

Mephistopheles quickly returns to his confident, almost arrogant, self as he and God place the bet to see if Faust, representing all humans, can be corrupted:

GOD.	He regrets not his pursuit, with which he is content.
MEPHISTOPHELES.	People have long indulged themselves in sensual pleasures.
	Let me lead him back onto the wrong path, and you will see
	his greedy, decadent nature.
GOD.	I permit you to go to the chaotic human world and subject
	those who tend toward good to trials.
MEPHISTOPHELES.	I am certain to win! <sup>357</sup>

The prologue accomplishes a couple of objectives that are needed for the audience to understand

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<sup>355</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 1.

<sup>356</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 2.

<sup>357</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 2.

what they are about to see. First, it establishes Mo Fei and the bet that he has placed with God. It also provides an insight into Mo Fei's confident and mischievous characteristics. Second, the prologue tells the audience what kind of performance this is going to be: an experimental piece, almost avant-garde, based in *jingju* but unabashedly mixing both Western and *jingju* conventions to represent both *Faust*'s German origins and the *jingju* medium. Budde writes in his history of *Faust* in China that when Western productions were originally performed in a Western context,

“All of them built an extraordinarily complex cultural system of reference which can in many ways be decoded within [the original] framework. But if one of its components (e.g. *Faust*) travels elsewhere, removed from its original system of reference, it will be recodified within the referential system (e.g. Chinese culture and history) it then meets.”<sup>358</sup>

In the case of this production, however, I will argue that the Creative team manages to combine enough convention from both Western theatre and *jingju* to make this production a hybrid. There are many elements of the production that are clearly Chinese, and some Western. These conventions are established in the prologue and will be further discussed throughout this chapter.

### Scene 1: Contract

Scene 1 is where the audience sees Fushide as a *laosheng*, an older male character. Dressed in long, white, and flowing robes, Fushide is unable to move quickly. Liu Dake, the *hualian* actor portraying Faust, uses his body and his steps to signify age. He is bent over and walks slowly to his desk. As he drinks wine, the audience hears his “theme song,” which is labeled as “Fushide's favorite lullaby” in the script.<sup>359</sup>

FUSHIDE. This evokes memories of old times, Though I am at the dusk of my life, (*puts down the wine cup*), isn't it unmanly to cut it short?  
Now in my body there are two different souls:

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<sup>358</sup> Budde 177.

<sup>359</sup> M. Li, *Fushide* Script 4.

One wishes to linger in this world, the other to abandon it.<sup>360</sup>

Fushide's emotional crossroads makes him an easy target for Mo Fei. He appears magically standing on Fushide's chair, a position Zhang assumes during a moment when the audience is distracted by a lighting sequence meant to represent wind blowing the windows and causing the candle to flicker.

Mo Fei, who recognizes that Fushide is regretting the life he has lived, proposes to help him relive his life.

MO FEI.	I am the Spirit of Denial
FUSHIDE.	Why are you here? To shame me?
MO FEI.	Isn't it cowardly to finish your life with a sneaking way? Don't be afraid, I am here for a favor – to help you fulfil your wishes and invite you to a second lease of life.
FUSHIDE.	A second lease of life? What do you want in return?
MO FEI.	Well, nothing. If you let me, I will do your bidding. <i>(Observes FUSHIDE's reaction stealthily.)</i>
MO FEI.	I will be your servant. I'll be your slave.
FUSHIDE.	<i>(Asks uncertainly)</i> If I ask for a beautiful spouse...
MO FEI.	You'll have one in no time!
FUSHIDE.	A crown and a palace?
MO FEI.	I can get them in a flash
FUSHIDE.	Give me Heaven and Earth.
MO FEI.	You will not get phantoms.
FUSHIDE.	Convince me!
MO FEI.	Raise your head and have a look! <i>(MO FEI casts a spell, In the music of FUSHIDE's favorite nursery rhyme, GELEIQING glides onstage gracefully, with her back to the audience. Enchanted, FUSHIDE follows her. GELEIQING goes off stage)</i> <sup>361</sup>

Fushide, like many other versions of Faust, wants Geleiqing immediately, but Mo Fei points out that he is too old for her. Fushide is convinced, although he hesitates, showing the anxiety by

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<sup>360</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 5

<sup>361</sup> M. Li, *Fushide* Script 7.

moving towards and away from the cup Mo Fei holds. He remembers all of the students he has taught and how studied he is, but that he has no children or friends.

FUSHIDE                    (*sings*) I am discontented and dissatisfied.  
As a man, I have led a life in this human world.  
Living in a cottage, clad in rags, I have only books around.  
My lamentable old age has awakened me to the harsh  
world. For my learning I am praised; of students I have a  
multitude.  
But neither rank nor wealth is my friend and I have no  
child. Nay, do not vacillate. Make up your mind.  
Fame and gains, right and wrong, I will disregard.  
Today with you, I will sign this contract.  
But, first of all, please clap my hand  
(*He claps hands with MO FEI*).<sup>362</sup>

Fushide drinks the potion. In the script, the stage directions say that “FUSHIDE drains the bottle. Once he finishes, he starts shaking all over and sits on his feet. MO FEI gets rid of FUSHIDE’s beard. FUSHIDE rises back onto his feet and takes off his [*laosheng* costume], [and feels his spirits rise].”<sup>363</sup> Non-specific stage directions are typical in *jingju* scripts, and while these particular stage directions give a little more detail than other stage directions, they do not actually compare to what is seen on stage. The central part of these stage directions is that Fushide turns into a young man and in order to show that onstage, directors Peschke and Xu Mengke had to work closely with the choreographers, Zhou Liya and Han Zhen, to make the transformation happen. Not only does Fushide’s *laosheng* costume have to be removed, but he also has to become a completely different role category.

The sequence begins with Fushide draining the bottle of potion. As the potion begins to take hold, Fushide and Mo Fei start to stagger from side to side. Swinging the sleeves of his robe like water sleeves, Fushide performs a *paoyuanchang* towards upstage left; as a reminder, this is

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<sup>362</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 9.

<sup>363</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 9-10.



that specific kind of walk in which the actor quickly moves in a circle or arc across stage while barely lifting the feet off the floor. He spins around and leans back into Mo Fei who takes off the white flowing robes. After the robes have disappeared, Fushide performs a series of turns and flips, showing the required difference in energy. He lands center stage and, using his elbows and his head, he swings his beard from side to side, tossing the hair in the air with his elbows, while Mo Fei swings the robes in a large circle. Getting up from his kneeling position centerstage, Fushide moves in a circle towards the upstage right corner, taking the beard off in the process and placing it under the desk. He meets Mo Fei and grabs the bottom of the robes. Fushide spins under the robes while Mo Fei holds on to the other end, reminiscent of a martial move mainly reserved for *wudan*, or martial female roles, in which a *wusheng* holds on to the end of the spear and the *wudan* holds on to the other end while spinning quickly under it and traveling across stage.

Fushide exits the stage while Mo Fei stays and performs a sequence with the robe and beard, which he swings alternatively. Placing these two items behind the table, Mo Fei then removes the banner from the front of the table and performs a sequence with the banner, guiding it over his head and along the floor, sometimes with one leg in the air. This sequence accomplishes two main objectives: first, it demonstrates Zhang Ming's skill with banners and second, it fills the time it takes for Liu Dake to change into his *xiaosheng* costume. When he does enter, Fushide has changed into a white robe with flowers embroidered all over it, the flowers indicating his status as a young lover.<sup>364</sup> He jumps onto the table, pulls his leg towards the side of his head and then jumps off the table, landing in a split on the floor, completing his transformation into a young man.

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<sup>364</sup> Bonds 34.

## Scene 2: Romance

This scene introduces the audience to Geleiqing and her brother, Hualunting (Valentine), and leads up to the tragedy. The majority of the scene includes, what I call convention mixing. Geleiqing, a *huashan* character with clear *qingyi* and *huadan* traits, enters holding a basket of silk that has to be washed, while singing a short aria describing the scenery around her and what she is doing.

GELEIQING. Down this creek-side path I travel in the mountain forest.  
By winter jasmines in bloom spring is everywhere greeted.  
But the beauty of the flowers has been left appreciated.  
Haste! With my silk-washing work done I'm home-bound.<sup>365</sup>

As Geleiqing finishes her aria, she pulls two pieces of silk from her basket. Holding them, she starts to dance and manipulate them like water sleeves. She kneels in the downstage left corner and begins to wash the silk first by holding the ends and waving them up and down, then by holding two corners and sweeping them across the stage as if she were dragging them through the stream (Fig 39).



Fig 39: Geleiqing washing her silk

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<sup>365</sup> M. Li, *Fushide* Script 10

While Geleiqing focuses on her silk, Fushide and Mo Fei enter. Mo Fei, in keeping with his “gentleman”<sup>366</sup> persona, carries a white fan. Both characters share a short aria, describing where they are and the scenery around them.

FUSHIDE. Travelling in the mountains, I feast my eyes.

MO FEI. On a stroll, I enjoy the view on both sides.

FUSHIDE. What a beautiful landscape! What a fascinating place!<sup>367</sup>

Fushide sees Geleiqing in person for the first time and is struck by her beauty. He makes several attempts to speak to her: first he tries to gesture to her and then he bows to her, but she does not see him. Finally, Mo Fei, who has been watching this exchange, uses his fan to cause the stream to flow over. Slipping in the water, Geleiqing, again using the silk like water sleeves, turns and performs a *paoyuanchang*, backing into Fushide. He asks her name, which she does not give him; he offers to escort her home, and she says that she knows the way home. Fushide tries to force her to let him take her home by opening his arms and running towards her. In a conventional movement sequence to show running away from someone, Geleiqing dodges Fushide’s advances by running upstage as he runs downstage, they then run to opposite edges of the stage. Just as Geleiqing reaches her position downstage, Mo Fei scares her away off stage.

Instantly smitten, Fushide asks Mo Fei for help to seduce Geleiqing. Mo Fei produces a necklace from behind his red fan, which he has switched for the white one. The new red fan in this specific moment helps to emphasize the infatuation that Fushide feels for Geileiqing: he feels younger and happier again now that he has found her, feelings which are encompassed in the meanings of the color red and further emphasized by the appearance of a necklace, a gift to potentially grow the love.

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<sup>366</sup> Pechke, “Interview” April 2016

<sup>367</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 10-11

Fushide stares longingly at the necklace, fondling it in his fingers as he sways from side to side in a wide-legged position, declaring “tonight I shall sleep with the beauty.”<sup>368</sup> Excitedly, Fushide clutches the necklace in his hand and travels upstage, where he meets Mo Fei. With their right hands in the air and their left hands tucked behind their backs, Mo Fei and Fushide begin to run downstage in slow motion. Both men start off slowly, but in his excitement, Fushide begins a very fast run in place as the orchestra plays the famous opening of the *William Tell Overture*, which has worked itself into American pop culture with the television show *The Lone Ranger*, and often used for fast movement in American culture, which Peschke, Ceccarelli, and Cipriani, I believe, were alluding to. Meanwhile, Mo Fei, who has been searching for Geleiqing’s home, stops, tucks his fan into the back of his robe, grabs Fushide’s robe and speaks to him in Italian, amusing the audience. Liu Dake then performs a short acrobatic sequence. He meets Zhang Ming at the upstage left corner, where they perform a short sequence together, ending in the same position, but now facing in opposite directions, with Fushide facing downstage and Mo Fei facing upstage. Mo Fei gives Fushide an exasperated look, takes Fushide’s outstretched right arm, and spins him around so that they are facing the same direction. Following *jingju* convention, Mo Fei exits the stage with a slightly curved trajectory. Fushide follows the same convention, but with a wider curve, so he is left on stage alone. Realizing that Mo Fei has already exited, Fushide, waves his hands telling Mo Fei to wait and runs off stage, after which the scene goes black.

### *Geleiqing’s Home*

When the lights come back up, we are now at Geleiqing’s house. On stage, there is a large red frame holding a translucent screen, with a chair sitting in front of it. Geleiqing stands in

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<sup>368</sup> M. Li, *Fushide* Script 11

between the chair and the screen, admiring her shadow as she gracefully moves from side to side. She recounts her encounter with Fushide.

GELEIQING. How insolent that man was to propose to go home with me!  
Given his majestic, scholarly bearing, he looked like a cultured,  
educated man.  
How could he be so rash?  
We are of vastly different status and backgrounds.  
A poor girl will never be a good match for a rich boy.<sup>369</sup>

As soon as she finishes her reflections, her brother, Hualunting, who has just returned from the front lines, coughs from offstage and enters to the sound of a percussion pattern that is traditional for military characters. Hualunting, like his original counterpart, Valentine, does not have a very large physical role in this story, but the emotional weight of his death determines much of Gretchen's emotional arc. From the beginning of Hualunting's time on stage, the audience is able to determine two specific aspects of his personality: he is a soldier and he loves his sister. He walks on stage with the traditional walk of a soldier: long and measured steps, with one arm in a controlled swing and the other hand resting on his sword. Hualunting calls out to Geleiqing: "Geleiqing, open the door!"<sup>370</sup> and she opens the door by bringing her two hands together with palms facing outward, she then takes her right hand and mimes opening the latch, then she opens the door by separating her hands and leaning her body back slightly. She steps to one side and Hualunting enters, stepping over the door sill and showing this by bringing one leg up in the air and landing it about half a foot away. Stepping completely into the house, he also closes the door, using larger gestures than Geleiqing and, in a wide stance, leans towards her with his hands outstretched and palms up. Geleiqing looks at him and his hands as though confused, but he

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<sup>369</sup> M.Li *Fushide* Script 14-15

<sup>370</sup> M. Li, *Fushide* Script16.

leans further towards her and uses his eyes to encourage her to play along. She gives in and they start playing a childhood clapping game as the orchestra plays a simple tune. Geleiqing stops suddenly and walks away from her brother with a sad look on her face (Fig 40).



Fig 40: Geleiqing and Hualunting

Hualunting, who has moved stage left, brings one hand up and points at Geleiqing with the other hand showing the audience that he knows that she is upset about something and that he can probably bring it out of her.

HUALUNTING.	Geleiqing, anything on your mind?
GELEIQING.	No.
HUALUNTING.	My dear, are you in love with anyone?
GELEIQING.	No.
HUALUNTING.	On my way home, I heard many neighbors talk about you.
GELEIQING.	(panicky) What did they say?
HUALUNTING.	They all praised you for your thrift and hard work.
GELEIQING.	I am obliged to do that. <sup>371</sup>

Hualunting is called away to drink with some friends. As he exits, Geleiqing walks back to the chair in front of the screen, and the lights come down on the house and go up on the front of the stage, where Fushide and Mo Fei enter.

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<sup>371</sup> M. Li. *Fushide* Script. 16-17.

Mo Fei points to the house and tells Fushide that they have arrived. He hands Fushide the necklace, which Fushide refuses. Annoyed, Mo Fei grabs Fushide's hand and forces him to take the necklace. What follows is a humorous sequence of movements in which Fushide does not know how to give Geleiqing the necklace and, exasperated, Mo Fei shows him how. First, Fushide extends one foot out and bows, holding the necklace out to an imaginary Geleiqing. Mo Fei looks at him, grabs it out of his hand again and slowly drops it to the floor. Staring at Fushide, he tells him to knock on the door. Breathing on his palms and rubbing them together, Fushide starts to knock on the door, but gets nervous and cannot do it. Mo Fei grabs his wrist and forces him to knock. Embarrassed, Fushide runs and hides behind Mo Fei as Geleiqing gets up from her chair and answers the door.

Without words, Geleiqing opens the door and, not finding anyone there, she gestures to the audience that she will check the left side. She looks, showing this by placing one hand next to her head and looking to the opposite side, and then switching hands and directions. Again, not seeing anyone, she comes back and tells the audience that she does not see anyone on that side of the stage, but will go check on the other side. As she walks to the other side of the stage, she steps on the necklace and stops. She walks backwards a couple of steps and sees the necklace. She gestures as if asking whether the necklace is for her and runs up to it, and almost picks it up off the ground. Deciding to not pick it up, Geleiqing walks back to her chair. Still curious, Geleiqing shyly walks up to the necklace again, but is scared to look greedy in front of the neighbors who have just praised her thrift. Changing her mind, she covers it over with her skirt and kicks it toward the house. She then twists her watersleeve around her hand, picks it up, runs back into the house, closes the door, sits back in her chair, and breathes heavily. She begins to admire the necklace, running the pearls through her fingers. Getting up from the chair, she holds

the necklace up to the light and then swings a section of it around as she travels downstage in a serpentine pattern. Turning her back to the audience, she places the necklace around her neck and ends the sequence holding it close to her.

This sequence is very reminiscent of a short *jingju* play called *Picking Up the Jade Bracelet*, in which a scholar falls in love with a young girl and drops a jade bracelet for her to find. She finds it and starts to play with and admire it. The overwhelming innocence displayed in *Picking Up the Jade Bracelet* that audiences see today, only came to prominence in the 1950s. Prior to the 1950s, the *huadan* role category was characterized by a significant amount of playful and bawdy behavior.<sup>372</sup> However, during the Republican Era (1912-1949), which was characterized by a desire for China to separate itself from its feudalistic roots and modernize, a strong push to censor *xiqu* performances that had been deemed too explicitly sexual became a priority. According to Joshua Goldstein, “one of the easiest ways to draw such lines was to ban *huadan* and the ‘spring longing’ (思春 *sichun*) plays in which they fantasized about sex.”<sup>373</sup> This led to *huadan* leaning *huashan*-centered performances, including *Picking Up the Jade Bracelet*, to be cleaned up and rid of any behavior that could be considered sexually explicit.

The sequence in *Fushide* requires a strong *huadan*-leaning *huashan* performer because not only does the character play with the necklace but she needs to emphasize the charm, the joy, and the innocence of the *huadan* role category and the creative team’s adaptation of the sequence in *Fushide* emphasizes Geleiqing’s innocence and contributes to creating the sadness that audiences should feel when that innocence is taken away.

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<sup>372</sup> Goldstein 125-126.

<sup>373</sup> Goldstein 252.



In the middle of the sequence, Geleiqing kneels at center stage and the lights dim. As she kneels, a single gong stroke is heard offstage to announce the time, and the lights begin to change from bright to dim, emphasizing the color red and becoming more seductive. Geleiqing begins to change from a *huadan* -leaning *huashan* to a *guimendan* (闺门旦), or boudoir *dan*<sup>374</sup>, a younger, more vivacious *qingyi*<sup>375</sup> - leaning *huashan*. She starts to dance again, but now with slower movements and with more emphasis on the actor's skill with the water sleeves and on drawing the audience's attention to the shape of her body. This adds an extra alluring and sophisticated layer that creates a stark difference between the innocent post-1950s *huadan*-leaning *huashan* and *guimendan*- leaning *huashan* role category traits within Geleiqing.

Fushide's seduction of Geleiqing begins with innocent flirtation, in which Geleiqing sings about how love has affected her.

GELEIQING. The attack of love has made me delirious  
Faltering, I can't even stand on my legs.<sup>376</sup>

Their flirtation takes a turn for the magical and dangerous when Geleiqing tells Fushide that her "mother is a light sleeper. What if she sees us together?"<sup>377</sup> Mo Fei, who has been sitting downstage right, throws a bottle to Fushide who tells Geleiqing that it is a bottle of sleeping potion to give her mother so that they will not be disturbed.

FUSHIDE. Don't worry. I have a sleeping potion here.  
Let her have three drops and she would definitely sleep soundly till  
daybreak!  
GELEIQING. Will it harm her health?  
FUSHIDE. I don't harm others on purpose.  
MO FEI. She might never wake up again.  
GELEIQING. I will do everything to be with you, sir.

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<sup>374</sup> Wichmann "Listening" 9.

<sup>375</sup> Wichmann "Listening" 9.

<sup>376</sup> M.Li, *Fushid* Script 19.

<sup>377</sup> M.Li, *Fushid* Script 19.

MO FEI.           So will I.  
 GELEIQING. My elder brother has been to the pub. What if he returns?  
 FUSHIDE.       Men at the pub never leave till daybreak.  
 MO FEI.           He will return in no time.  
 GELEIQING. Sir, if you love me for a moment, I will love you for a lifetime.  
*(Theme music plays, FUSHIDE and GELEIQING dance, which MO FEI controls).*<sup>378</sup>

This scene, on one level, is very sweet. Geleiqing shares her romantic dreams and hopes for the future. The scene is also very cruel, especially considering Fushide's responses and Mo Fei's asides. These two men, who are much more learned and aware of human nature and emotion than is Geleiqing, are taking advantage of an innocent young girl without any thought towards the consequences of their actions.

Geleiqing exits to give the potion to her mother. Meanwhile, Fushide turns to Mo Fei for help on what to do next. Mo Fei demonstrates the proper way to greet and seduce a woman, which Fushide imitates, but in a more humorous fashion. At one point, Mo Fei takes Fushide's arms and wraps them around his waist in a hug. As they embrace, the orchestra starts to play the love theme that is often played between Fushide and Geleiqing, Mo Fei, realizing the position they are in and the music that is being played, quickly pushes him away just as Geleiqing reenters.

Continuing with their flirtation, Fushide and Geleiqing begin to dance, while Mo Fei watches from the chair. In our interview, Liu Dake expanded on how the dance was created:

After the Italian composer wrote the music, we found that we weren't able to choreograph the dances because we realized this required modern dance, but we can't do modern dance because we aren't dancers. What we did was to use drama instead of dance. We asked the director for advice and then we hired a choreographer and he instantly figured out the dance. Fushide is under Mo Fei's spell, but Geleiqing isn't inexperienced, she knows what can happen between a man and a woman, but she feels embarrassed, but she wants to flirt. This is why

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<sup>378</sup> M. Li, *Fushide* Script 20.

the scene is so interesting. It says that if you show me emotion, I am willing. Fushide feels that he controls Geleiqing – he has taught her how to walk, how to embrace – but then it turns out, that he didn't need to go through all this work, she was willing to give herself to him anyway. However, she still feels embarrassed. You still have to take some initiative, but you don't know how. This is what is interesting. Also, I feel the dance should not be provocative. I feel that is what is best about Chinese culture: is that it leads you to think about it without acting it out explicitly.<sup>379</sup>

The actors, realizing that traditional Chinese dance did not match with the music, looked to modern dance to express their characters' emotions, allowing those emotions to guide their movements; the use of modern dance gave the actors the freedom to show all of the underlying layers that make this particular moment bittersweet because of their ill-fated love.

While Fushide and Geleiqing are in her bedroom, Hualunting comes home early. Shaking his hand in agitation, Hualunting circles to mid stage from his position down stage and then walks towards the screen. He again shakes his hand towards the bedroom and takes his sword out of the scabbard with his other hand. He slashes at the air in an "X" shape, showing the audience that he will defend his sister and kill whoever is with her.

He runs behind the screen and pulls Fushide by the wrist out from behind the screen, with Mo Fei following. As they reach center stage, Fushide and Hualunting begin to fight. At one moment, Hualunting's sword hits Fushide in the chest and in reaction, Fushide makes a surprised look with eyes wide and mouth wide open. Mo Fei freezes the fight and moves Fushide over, while also laughing about the look on Fushide's face. He drops Fushide's arms then moves them back and starts the action again. As he unfreezes, Fushide sneezes and performs another short sequence of impressive leaps and turns. Landing in a wide legged stance, Fushide, facing Hualunting, gestures to Hualunting to say "let's go," and they begin to fight again, but in slow

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<sup>379</sup> D. Liu, "Interview" March, 2016.

motion, while Mo Fei walks around them in normal time, conducting the fight. He enters the fight every now and then at a slower pace (Fig 41).



Fig 41: The Fight

The fight ends when Hualunting realizes that he is unable to kill Fushide even though he tries to stab him several times. Fushide, also realizing that he cannot be killed, takes the sword and stabs Hualunting, just as Geleiqing enters to watch her brother die. As she enters, Mo Fei, Fushide, and Hualunting perform a *cuobu* (蹉步), or slipping step, across the stage as Mo Fei yells “Man killed!”<sup>380</sup> This particular step is used, primarily for male characters to signify urgency, anxiety, or nervousness.<sup>381</sup>

Hualunting gestures to Fushide in anger while Mo Fei tells Fushide to get off the stage, which he does. Hualunting curses Geleiqing for her actions and dies soon after. While she cries over his body, Mo Fei announces that her mother has died. Throwing her hands in the air, Geleiqing shakes them to show distress and cries for her brother and her mother. Suddenly, the lights focus in on her and she brings her hands to her belly, realizing that she is pregnant. She circles her hands around her belly and the audience sees the beginning of the deterioration of her mind caused by the grief and the realization that she has been abandoned. Flipping her right

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<sup>380</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 23.

<sup>381</sup> Fan175.

watersleeve over her right hand and bringing her left hand up in the air, Geleiqing exits in grief and despair.

### Scene 3: Misfortune

This short scene opens with Fushide's own realization that even though he has seduced the girl he wanted he is still unsatisfied. The audience sees the *hualian* of Fushide begin to come out: his voice is deeper, gravelly, and his movements are bigger than they had been in previous scenes. Mo Fei declares that Fushide is continuously "overstepping the bounds of morality. His desires are insatiable. Even if God patronizes him, he will be covered with dirt and forsaken by the kind! I am certain to win!"<sup>382</sup> As they talk, a figure dressed in black enters the stage. Fushide notices her and declares that she looks like Geleiqing, Mo Fei says that it is not, and lures Fushide off stage with promises of beautiful women and wine. Fushide walks off stage, with his upper body bent over, his arms outstretched, and a facial expression that suggests a creature who is not in control of his mind. He lumbers off stage following Mo Fei, still the gentleman.

The rest of the scene focuses on Geleiqing and her state of mind. She enters the stage wearing a white dress, with a purple under-dress, and pink-tipped water sleeves, showing that she is mourning for her family and, maybe, her life, but that she also might still have some romantic feelings within her. She turns to face the audience, revealing that she is holding a baby. Eyes downcast, Geleiqing begins to sing about her broken heart and her still-existing love for Fushide. The Geleiqing in this scene is much more a *qingyi*, expressing her sadness and despair through song. She does not cover as much ground with her movement, instead staying around center stage, while utilizing her water sleeves and turning small circles.

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<sup>382</sup> M. Li, *Fushide* Script 25

As she sings, she cuddles her son and ends the aria kneeling upstage center. As the lights go down, a male voice is heard overhead, saying “Geleiqing.” Leaving the baby upstage, Geleiqing, in a dream marked by the use of strobe lights, walks around the stage as three men in demon masks, representing the neighbors, begin to creep out on stage. Twisting and waving her water sleeves around, she walks to each corner of the stage and a demon walks forward and frightens her. Accompanied by eerie music, she is forced center stage and the three demons surround her and point at her. She tries to escape from them by performing *paoyuanchang*, while twisting her water sleeves on both sides of her body. She moves downstage center, faces upstage, and performs a backbend while still twisting her water sleeves, as the three neighbors point at her. She rises to her full height and pushes them away by waving her water sleeves at them, but as she moves further upstage, the neighbors surround her and force her to the floor and the same position she was in before she started dreaming.

Geleiqing begins to sing again, with her back towards the audience, about how the “neighbors’ derision and criticism grate on the ear.”<sup>383</sup> She turns around, holding her baby, and stumbles to one side, while bringing her free hand to her head to show that her head is hurting. Looking at her baby, she notices that he has a “dark grimace”<sup>384</sup> on his face, which scares her. Walking in a large circle, Geleiqing brings her baby to a river and tries to wash his face with her hand. Frustrated that the grimace is not coming off, she holds part of her water sleeve in her hand and draws fast circles with the sleeve as if soaking it with water and throws water onto the child’s face. Annoyed, she places the baby in the water and washes his face with both sleeves, while looking away so that water does not get in her own eyes. Looking down at the baby, she

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<sup>383</sup>M. Li *Fushide* Script 27

<sup>384</sup> M. Li *Fushide* Script 27

smiles, pleased with how clean he is. She picks him up and, surprised, asks him why he is not crying. Asking repeatedly, she listens to the baby's heartbeat and realizes that he is dead. Crying, Geleiqing throws the baby on the ground and falls to the side. She tries to pick him up, but instead reaches her hands to the sky, brings them down and starts to beat her chest in mourning. Picking him up, she hugs and looks at him. As she looks at the baby, she believes that she sees him smiling and begins to laugh with the baby while skipping in a large circle, clearly going mad. Gently swinging the baby in the air, Geleiqing walks off stage.

Fushide and Mo Fei enter. Fushide is shocked by the state to which Geleiqing has been reduced. Using the techniques of a *hualian*, primarily the body and the voice, Fushide demonstrates his frustration and sadness through large movements with his arms and legs, while Mo Fei continues to be calm and upright, barely moving his limbs except for his hand to gently wave his fan. Recognizing that he has been manipulated, Fushide starts to fight with Mo Fei, which Mo Fei quickly ends. At the end, Fushide is on the floor with Mo Fei standing over him in a position of dominance. Mo Fei then begins to show Fushide how everything that has occurred is actually his fault.

MO FEI.	Do you know that you killed her brother? Her mother will never wake up because of taking too many sleeping pills? She will be hung tomorrow because she killed the baby by drowning it. Who is to blame for her depravity? Me or you? Who should do more to improve? Me or you? ( <i>He goes offstage</i> )
FUSHIDE.	Help me save her!
MO FEI.	I will take you to the prison. But if you wish to save her, do it in person <sup>385</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> M. Li *Fushide* 30.

#### Scene 4: Redemption

The final and last scene takes place in Geleiqing's prison cell, which is represented by seven *xiqu* chairs in a half circle. Geleiqing, wearing a red and white ombre dress and a black oval shaped headdress, is led into the circle by one of the men in a demon mask, wearing a red and white ombre dress and a black oval shaped headdress. Fushide enters, wearing a black robe and a long wig that is dyed red at the top. He enters the cell by jumping over the back of the center chair. Believing him to be the executioner, Geleiqing begs him for one more day. In order to get her to remember who he is, Fushide begins to sing the lullaby they sang together. She remembers and sings about their love and how love sick she has felt for Fushide since he left (Fig 42).



Fig 42: In Geleiqing's prison cell

Because she remembers him, Fushide tries to take her out of prison, however, she begins to think that she sees their son's blood on his hands. She runs away from him towards the center chair, and as he runs towards her, the chairs on the floor are enveloped in darkness, while seven broken chairs drop from the ceiling representing the end of the dream and indicating that Geleiqing is dead. The play ends with Fushide singing about the shame he feels at having been so greedy and ruining Geleiqing's life.



## Music

The orchestra for *Fushide* was a combination of Western and *jingju* instruments, sat together on the same platform, each orchestra playing their own solos and then together for certain sections of the production. The interweaving of the two instrumental ensembles, Western and *jingju*, was born out of a collaboration between *jingju* composer Chen Xiaoman and Italian composers Luigi Ceccarelli and Alessandro Cipriani. As a team, they were able to create a musical atmosphere that allowed *jingju* and Western musical conventions not only to shine individually, but also to create a very mysterious and eerie atmosphere when they were combined.

The *jingju* ensemble focused on performing what is traditionally needed from a *jingju* orchestra: accompaniment for arias and movement, and percussion for the combat sequences. The Western ensemble, on the other hand, mostly performed background music, but also had short featured sections, including playing the *William Tell Overture* while Fushide and Mo Fei were travelling to Geleiqing's house. It was also charged with playing the Love theme song when Fushide and Geleiqing first met and slept together, and when Fushide tried to bring Geleiqing out of her madness in prison. It also played the lullaby and accompaniment for the hand game that Hualunting and Geleiqing played during Scene 2. The Western ensemble also included either a triangle or a bell that was played every time something magical occurred. For example, when Mo Fei first produced the necklace and the potion bottle, and when Mo Fei froze the fight between Fushide and Hualunting and began to move them around the stage in slow motion.

There were poignant moments when both ensembles played together to create a musical environment that emphasized and highlighted the eerie nature of *Fushide*. During Scene 3, when

Geleiqing tried to wash her baby in the river to clean him, the two ensembles played together slowly at first, then at increasing tempos as Geleiqing became more and more frenzied. They also played together during Geleiqing's opening aria of the scene, sung while she held her baby.

GELEIQING. Exhausted and broken-hearted, I have no tears to shed.  
Disillusioned yet still lovesick, I now feel icily cold.  
Why do dewdrops look like teardrops? How desolate!  
Why is the crescent moon like a scythe? No stars in sight!  
Ghosts wander in the pitch dark. They stifle life and light!  
My son, let me take you to your father.  
Don't be afraid. Don't cry.<sup>386</sup>

This aria, which was composed in *erhuang*, created a moment for Geleiqing to express not only her sadness at being abandoned, but to show the audience how Fushide and Mo Fei's actions have had such a devastating effect.

For the most part, *jingju* musical convention remained the same: with the percussion section accenting the movement and the speech of the actors, and the stringed instruments accompanying the actors in their arias. However, there was a moment when the *jingju* orchestra did have to adapt their normal practice in order to comply with Peschke's concept. Emphasizing the other-worldliness of Mo Fei, Peschke wanted the percussion orchestra to speak accompaniment *a capella*, which as mentioned above is normally done only during rehearsals by both the orchestra and the actors in order to get the beats ingrained in their minds and bodies. It is not surprising, then, that the *jingju* ensemble was naturally resistant to this idea, but Peschke insisted and they eventually agreed. The unusualness of this particular moment, which is placed at the very beginning of the production, helped to establish the eeriness of both the entire show, and of Mo Fei as a character.

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<sup>386</sup> M :Lii, *Fushide* Script 26.

## **Sets and Lighting**

### **Sets**

As for many *jingju* productions, the set design for *Fushide* is simple, consisting mainly of chairs and tables to indicate location. Fushide's office is the only location with smaller props, consisting of books and a wine glass, showing that his life has revolved solely around his work. When Mo Fei gives him the potion to become younger, all of the books are swept off the table, representing a complete change from the scholar to a man dedicated to finding love and living his life to the fullest.

Geleiqing and Hualunting's home is represented by just a chair and a shadow screen, an unusual set piece for *jingju*, but not for *huaju*. The shadow screen allowed the actors to play on both sides, depending on the direction from which it is lit. At the beginning of the scene, Geleiqing, like many young girls, stands in front of the screen as if it was a mirror, dreaming of Fushide while slowly moving her body and admiring her hair and herself from different angles. Later in the scene, as Fushide seduces Geleiqing, they move to Geleiqing's bedroom behind the screen. Lit from behind, the screen becomes a thin wall, through which the audience and Mo Fei both become witnesses to the final result of Fushide's seduction. It is also from behind this wall that Hualunting pulls Fushide out and attacks him to save his sister's reputation.

The prison cell for the last scene consists of seven chairs. Six are the same height, while the one in the center is shorter than the others because Liu Dake, as Fushide, leaps over this chair in order to get to Geleiqing. The choice of chairs to represent the prison cell is a simple, yet affective choice. The bars on the back of the chairs are used to represent the bars of a prison cell, thus utilizing the structure of the chair to add to the effect of a jail cell. At the end of the scene, as Geleiqing dies, the seven chairs disappear and seven broken chairs fall from the ceiling,

lending a dramatic effect to the end of the play. The broken chairs represents the idea that everything Fushide has touched during his dream, or nightmare, has been destroyed because of his greed and selfishness.<sup>387</sup> Geleiqing is dead because of him, his life surrounded by books is gone, and his greed has sent him down a path from which he cannot return. Essentially, the dream is over and Fushide is left alone.

### Lighting

Lighting, in recent decades, has become more atmospherically important in *jingju* performances. In the *yangbanxi* of the Cultural Revolution, lighting became a major means for conveying emotion and creating alliances between the audience and specific characters, namely characters who were admirable representatives of the Communist Party, creating distrust of characters representing or allied with the enemy. Since then, creative teams have continued to use lighting to enhance the telling of the story and foster emotional responses from the audience.

In *Fushide*, the lighting adhered to *jingju* fundamentals with the broad white light, which allowed the audience to focus on the actors and their performances. At the same time, lighting designer Tommaso Checcucci also utilized spot lights, which were used during the Cultural Revolution to highlight *yangbanxi* (样板戏), or Revolutionary *jingju*, heroes, to illustrate and shape the emotional arc of Fushide and Geleiqing.

The most dramatic lighting, unsurprisingly, occurs with Geleiqing. Her tragedy is especially highlighted in three particular moments in Scenes 2 and 3. The first is when she finds the necklace that Fushide has dropped on the ground for her. Her young and innocent excitement at finding the necklace leads her to dance with the precious gift. The lighting remains bright and cheery until she puts the necklace on, when it suddenly becomes darker and more romantic. Her

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<sup>387</sup> Peschke "Interview" April 2016.

movements also reflect this change and become slower and more sensual as she dreams of Fushide. The second moment occurs at the end of Scene 2, when Hualunting has died and Geleiqing has also realized, very suddenly, that she is pregnant. She quickly looks at the audience and brings her hands up to her belly just as the lighting changes from the white wash to a spotlight on her. This moment not only marks the beginning of Geleiqing's tragedy, but also highlights the magical nature of the events that have taken place. The third moment happens in Scene 3 where, in order to enhance the nightmarish nature of the gossip and shame that she feels, Geleiqing is surrounded by three men wearing demon masks. As they move around her and point and judge, a strobe light begins to flash, creating a harsh environment and the appearance of choppy movements by the actors. Anyone who has had experience with strobe lights knows that they make it difficult to keep focus for very long, so they serve to bring the audience into Geleiqing's nightmare, in which she is unable to focus and ignore the gossip that surrounds her.

### **Costumes and Makeup**

#### **Costumes**

The costumes for *Fushide* are/were a modern version of older Chinese styles. Designed by A Kun, who designed the costumes for the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2008, as mentioned above, the costumes mainly consisted of flowing robes that had been dyed with an ombre design, in which colors are blended and faded into each other. The departure from a strictly traditional style of *jingju* costume not only came from A Kun's deep understanding of costume design, but also from Liu Dake, who encouraged him to "use your understanding to design the costumes," saying that "we all have our own thinking."<sup>388</sup> According to Liu Dake, A Kun recognized that he had to take care of the traditional audiences, as well as

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<sup>388</sup> Dake,Liu "Interview" January 2016.

make it easier for the actors to perform quick changes, which made the flowing robes a good choice because they could be worn over other costume pieces as well as thrown off quickly backstage.

### Fushide

For Fushide's costumes, he goes through several transitions that are demarcated by the costumes he wears. When he first appears on stage, he is an old man with long white robes, a long white wig with a large bun on top of his head, and a long white beard, showing his advanced age and closeness to death. When he turns into a younger man, Liu Dake performs a series of acrobatic movements that not only show the potion taking effect, but also provided him with an opportunity to start the costume change with Zhang Ming's help. His beard and robes are pulled off during the sequence and he then exits to complete the costume change backstage. When he returns, Fushide has been turned into a *wen xiaosheng*, a civil young male role character, clean shaven and wearing a robe with light blue trim and embroidered flowers, worn by younger characters to indicate love and romance,<sup>389</sup> which characterizes Fushide during the second scene. As he is dragged further under Mo Fei's spell and influence, Fushide starts to adopt more and more *hualian* characteristics, including in the area of costuming; his romantic robes have been replaced with long and flowing black and red robes, and his light blue and white headdress has been replaced with a long brown wig that has a red patch on the crown of his head, echoing Mo Fei's red mohawk. On his feet, Fushide wears black soft sole boots.

### Mo Fei

From the beginning, the creative team established that Mo Fei was an unusual character. He is dressed like a *wusheng*, a martial male role, wearing two long pheasant feathers that are

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<sup>389</sup> Bonds, 3.

attached to a headdress designed to look like a red mohawk instead of the traditional headdress of a *wusheng* character. He wears a long grey form-fitting gown, reminiscent of the traditional dress of a scholar from the Qing Dynasty. In addition to the feathers and the gown, Mo Fei has on a long grey cape, which function as water sleeves. For the rest of the play, the cape, pheasant feathers, and the mohawk headdress are discarded, so Mo Fei simply wears the grey gown with his natural hair styled into a red-tipped mohawk. On his feet, he wears soft sole boots, typical of a *wusheng*.

### Geleiqing

Probably not surprisingly, a majority of costume changes in *Fushide* are reserved for Geleiqing. This is not just because she is the single female character in the play, but also because, like Fushide, she as a character goes through an emotional arc that is conveyed through costume as well as acting. Overall, most of her costumes are similar in profile and shape, mainly consisting of a fitted top and a flowing skirt, reminiscent of traditional Chinese dress. She also wears a black headdress that resembles a black halo around her head. In scenes 1 and 2, Geleiqing's costumes are pink and white, that have been dyed in with an ombre fade. The combination of the light pink and the white not only makes a very pretty picture, but it also conveys specific information. The pink is representative of Geleiqing as romantic, young, and innocent, while the white, the color for funerals, lends a sense of foreboding.

In scene 3, Geleiqing's grief is prominently displayed by her white top and skirt with dark blue piping. Her hair is more disheveled, with locks hanging down beside her face and a scarf tied around her head. But, in keeping with traditional *jingju* performance in which beauty (*mei* 美) is key, although Geleiqing is grief stricken and artfully disheveled, she is still beautiful to look at. In scene 4, when Geleiqing is in prison for killing her baby, she wears a long white

flowing skirt with a red fitted top with blue piping that flows into a floor length overskirt; it was paired with a large black hat that looks like a dark halo around her head. The moves from pink and white, to white and blue, and then to white, red, and blue is A Kun's way of displaying Geleiqing's tragedy through costume, moving from the innocent romantic to the grief stricken and then the mad and tragic figure that Geleiqing has become because of Fushide's actions. Throughout the performance, Geleiqing wears the traditional *caixie* (彩鞋), or flat shoes that are decorated with embroidery and a tassel on the toes. Her shoe color does not change throughout the production.

### Hualunting

Hualunting is the most traditional and the least developed of the four characters. He is a soldier, probably a high-ranking one, as hinted at through the color of his costume, which is green with orange piping. According to Alexandra Bonds, green is one of the upper five colors, indicating "high-ranking or military function for the wearer..."; "...[it] is worn by generals on and off the battlefield and civil officers in charge of military affairs"<sup>390</sup> As a *wusheng* character, Hualunting wears a pair of loose pants and a tunic that is tightened around his waist with an orange belt. On his head, he wears a traditional headdress of a *wusheng*, one that is green with orange accent pieces. On his feet, he wears *baodi xue* (薄底靴), or soft-soled ankle boots, which make it easier for martial characters to move quickly.

## **Performances**

### China

*Fushide*'s first performances were at Qinghua (Tsinghua) University in Beijing, which is especially famous for housing and teaching a considerable number of foreign students who wish

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<sup>390</sup> Bond: 73.



to learn Chinese through a variety of programs, such as the Fulbright. Historically, university campuses have been popular locations for experimental theatre and arts because students are open to experimentation and also because they are not connected to any particular theatre company. This gives the creative team some freedom in what they produce. In order to advertise the performance, the NCJC used WeChat—a popular app that allows the user to post status, text, share news, and exchange money—to advertise on the Qinghua University page, which is how a colleague found out about the production and told me about it in October of 2015.

The Qinghua performances were essentially preview performances, before the production went out to the Mei Lanfang Grand Theatre (梅兰芳大剧院), the official home of the NCJC, and then on to Europe. Many of the elements of the Qinghua University production remained the same, with the main difference between the two performances being in the ages of the audiences. At Qinghua, unsurprisingly, the audiences were comprised of young college students who held many opinions about the performance and were overall supportive of the adaptation.<sup>391</sup> Performing at the university level, according to Liu Dake, was the appropriate “first step” because “young people are more ready to accept what we perform, particularly college students. So the major motivation was to go to colleges. That was our hope, to show on college campuses, but not at the Mei Lanfang.”<sup>392</sup> In our interview, Liu Dake complained that the audiences at the Mei Lanfang often treat the performance as if it were a temple performance: “very casual. People who want to eat, eat; people who want to drink, drink; people who want to make trouble, make trouble. It’s this kind of model. This is different from Western theatre where people dress up

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<sup>391</sup> D. Liu “Interview”, March 2016.

<sup>392</sup> D. Liu “Interview”, March 2016.

very formally and sit in the audience and enjoy.”<sup>393</sup> Knowing all of this, I was curious to see what the reaction to *Fushide* would be.

In January of 2016, after their performances in Italy, *Fushide* did perform at the Mei Lanfang Grand Theatre, a space that is covered in red and gold décor and houses a large statue of Mei Lanfang in the entryway. The audiences who attend these productions tend to be older and more traditional. Throughout my year in Beijing, I attended performances at the Mei Lanfang at least once to twice a month and would often watch my fellow audience members who would be singing along to the performers on stage, something I found myself doing as well when I went to see a production of *Mu Guiying Takes Command* (穆桂英挂帅 *Mu Guiying Takes Command*). The audiences at the Mei Lanfang know their *jingju*, they know which performers excel, and how well each performer embodies the emotions of their character.

Overall, the audience I went to see the performance with were interested in the production. I have witnessed the “temple-theatre” like atmosphere at the Mei Lanfang before, but at *Fushide* it was not nearly as disruptive, with the exception of one man whose cell phone rang and he had a very loud conversation in the row in front of me in the orchestra section, therefore very close to the actors. Liu Dake, however, had a very different experience; he felt the audience was not able to easily accept the performance, but that they eventually did accept it. Zhang Ming had a variety of discussions with audience members, both foreign and domestic, who were skeptical about a *jingju* adaptation of *Faust*:

First, the foreign audiences don't like the art of *jingju* because this kind of art is very removed from what they know. Stage plays and musicals are more familiar. There are some small scale *jingju* performances [that they like], but foreign audiences find longer performances inaccessible. Also, the audience members had questions about the subject matter, they were worried that it wouldn't be good and they had expectations. Generally, each member of the audience had his or her

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<sup>393</sup> D. Liu “Interview”, March 2016.

own preconceived notion about the show. Some doubted whether *jingju* could do this kind of story. Others had this vision of *jingju* as being well balanced and steady, that the singing would last twenty minutes. They wondered if you could present a Western story in this kind of format. This is a purely Western story. Some people are curious. They feel there was the appearance of a new format and were excited by that.<sup>394</sup>

European audiences, according Anna Peschke, were generally excited about the production; however, she pointed out that, like the German reactions to *Woyicaike*, audiences who are not familiar with *jingju* probably believe that *Fushide* is representative of all *jingju* performances. *Fushide* has continued to be a very popular show, having now been performed over 75 times in China and Europe combined<sup>395</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

*Fushide*, as evidenced primarily by reported audience reaction, is a very provocative performance. In reviews of the performance at the Italian VIE Festival, which was founded with the “goal of crossing the contemporary world, of intercepting new identities and subjectivities which stand out in the field of live performance,”<sup>396</sup> *Fushide* struck a lot of chords, both with Chinese audiences in Italy and with Italian audiences who were not familiar with *jingju*. Zhang Jianda, the Cultural Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Italy, said that:

This is a very good fusion of Chinese and Western cultures. This performance is not just for the Western audience. I have been working in Italy since the 1980s. Basically, Italian audiences believe that Chinese opera is mainly based about martial arts. Today’s performance used *Faust* to bring *jingju* to the audience. This is a good way to enhance the audience’s appreciation level of the form. When Western audiences can experience the beauty of *jingju* and its ability to combine many different forms of performance, I think we can achieve the goal of a more in-depth exchange of Chinese and Western cultures.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Zhang, “Interview” May 2016.

<sup>395</sup> Peshcke “Interview” October 2017.

<sup>396</sup> VIE Festival

<sup>397</sup> Zhang qtd in J.Guo 3

Zhang's belief that this kind of experimental performance can bring about more conversation and exchange between Western and Chinese cultures is striking because not only are performances, like *Fushide*, changing perceptions about *jingju* as a whole, they are also expanding *jingju* reach around the globe. This is why viewing Carlson's Seven Relationships from multiple angles, especially for *Fushide* and *Woyicaike*, is so important. Seeing the challenge from all sides: how does a given decision affect the story? How does that decision affect how different types of audiences see the final production and how does it affect the image of the country that theatre form originates? The experimental nature, including the uses of solidly Western references, like the *William Tell Overture* and the single line in Italian, demonstrates how small the world is becoming. We are surrounded by multicultural references all the time, and through social media the accessibility and availability of those different cultures is much easier.

Because *Fushide*'s adaptation process was the result of international cooperation, the production appealed to three different types of audiences, two of which were non-Chinese and not familiar with *jingju*. Even with the international cooperation, *Fushide* was a *jingju* performance, albeit altered because of the mixture of Western and *jingju* conventions. Because of this, *Fushide* falls within the sixth stage of Carlson's Seven Relationships: "Foreign elements remain foreign, used within familiar structures for *verfremdung*, for shock value"<sup>398</sup> The reason for this placement is because while the creative process involved a lot of negotiation between the three parties involved, Chinese audiences could recognize the final production as a *jingju* with foreign elements and references. These elements, which have been discussed throughout this chapter, were small enough to not disrupt the flow of the *jingju* performance itself, but would

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<sup>398</sup> Carlson 83

shock Chinese audiences familiar with *jingju*, while appealing to the German and Italian audiences as well as add to the magical *mise en scene* of the performance.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This dissertation examined five case studies of *jingju* adaptations of Western Literature created and performed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, exploring the practical and theoretical measures used by each creative team, how each production was affected by the dynamics within its creative team, and the types of audiences for which each production was performed. This chapter summarizes those practical and theoretical measures and will continue to examine the extent to which these performances have demonstrated *jingju*'s position as China's national theatre form, including whether or not these performances, like Mei Lanfang's 1930s international tours, have helped to shape China's international reputation.

### **Practical Measures of Adaptation**

This dissertation has established as "practical measures" the chief elements that characterize *jingju*. This includes *jingju* conventions such as plot construction, the Four Main Skills, music, costumes and makeup, and sets. Together these elements create what can be considered total theatre and form the basis of *jingju*. When it comes to expanding *jingju* conventions to accommodate new adaptations, all the artists interviewed emphasized that the traditions and conventions of *jingju* are here to stay, but are not delicate, and can therefore tolerate and in fact need to be pushed to their limits to remain contemporarily relevant. As Liu Dake said:

I feel that basically we will not leave the traditional *jingju* approach; the flower has a root that nourishes us. This is the traditional show; we have to learn from our teachers. However, we also don't want to delay another thought that is what kinds of *jingju* will we come up with in doing Western topics. We can't delay a discussion of how we can take on contemporary topics. I feel our generation should do this. Besides, when we do traditional shows, we'll bring a new perspective to them.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> D. Liu "Interview", March 2016.

These adaptations presented an opportunity for Creative teams, no matter where they were from, to challenge themselves through the obstacles that naturally come along with the creation of new plays, as well as following the directive from the Chinese Ministry of Culture that new *jingju* performances must boost the performance market. In order to boost that market, creative teams chose to transport their adaptations to China in order to make the productions resonate with their Chinese audiences, as well as draw in non-Chinese audiences. These non-Chinese audiences then helped to create an image of China that is international, and willing even in its traditional performing arts to accept influences from other cultures, while also keeping the traditions intact.

### Mixing Role Categories

In creating new characters, the creative teams looked towards the tried and true technique of mixing role categories, taking elements from the various categories and mixing them together into a new character. For example, Xiang Qiang from *Zhuli Xiaojie*, was a combination of various *sheng* and *chou* role sub categories in order to emphasize Xiang Qiang's original pettiness, handsomeness, and arrogant nature. Chounu, from *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou*, was a combination of *chou* and *hualian* characteristics, needed for a character that had to be physically ugly and strong at the same time, while also being appealing. The ugliness was emphasized through his makeup, which highlighted the deformities in Chounu's face. Other characters were created by mixing different characterizations of minorities into already established *jingju* role categories. Ailiya, for example, is at her base a *huashan* character; however, the creative team incorporated Shi Yihong's extensive ballroom dance background to emphasize Ailiya's exoticism and to establish the idea that Shi felt she was secure enough in her

career to take risks<sup>400</sup>. This was also established in how Shi Yihong moved and held her body while standing still, incorporating a wide and open stance as opposed to the traditional narrow and demure stance of a *qingyi*.

### The Four Main Skills

While actors learn each of the Four Main Skills, the role category to which they are assigned specialize in specific skills that identify the age, sex, and general personality of the character, and serve to convey the changing emotional state of the character as well. For modern pieces in which characters have not been previously established on the basis of Chinese folklore, legends, or historical or current events, creative teams have to adapt and change the original characters to fit within *jingju* convention.

Dance-Acting is a major part of characterization development, especially when productions are intended for audiences unfamiliar with *jingju*. In *Woyicaike*, a production performed in Germany in front of a non-Chinese audience that was unfamiliar with *jingju* conventions, dance-acting became a vital part of communication between actor and audience. Throughout the performance, Zhang Song and Anna Peschke used both *jingju* movement and modern dance to tell *Woyicaike*'s story and to portray his interactions with the mannequins standing in for the other characters. Between his manipulation of the mannequins and his own movements, Zhang Song used dance-acting to tell *Woyicaike*'s story without relying too much on words and songs.

In other performances, creative teams chose to look to other cultures to emphasize the exotic nature or, in some cases, magical natures of their characters. For example, Ailiya's character development, as mentioned above, drew influences from Shi Yihong's extensive

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<sup>400</sup> Shi quoted in Li Ruru, "The Market" 142; Shi "Interview" June 2016.



ballroom dance background, which included three Latin-inspired dances. Using elements from these three dances and contemporary dance, the choreographer highlighted Ailiya's romanticism and exoticism, which were major elements of Ailiya's character. The magical transitions in *Fushide* were also created through dance-acting and fast movements. This is especially seen in Fushide's regression from an older to a younger man. Working together, Fushide and Mo Fei removed Fushide's robes through a flurry of large movements, meant to represent the effect of the potion. Other magical moments created through movement occurred when Fushide and Hualunting began fighting over Geileiqing. Mo Fei stopped the fight through tapping either Fushide or Hualunting's shoulder to freeze them. While they were frozen, Mo Fei then moved Fushide and Hualunting's bodies to magically alter the fight.

Costumes and makeup also help to create a more specific picture of the characters presented on stage. As Alexandra Bonds writes, costumes and makeup give the audience hints as to the personality, status, and age of the character even before they begin their performances.<sup>401</sup> Because the characters in these adaptations are new and, for the most part, created out of a combination of role categories, hints through costume and makeup not only help the audience to understand who the character is, but also help them to understand where those characters come from. Ailiya, judging from her wide skirts and feathered headdress, is foreign, presenting a picture of a Han Chinese version of a minority figure, instead of a typical *qingyi* or *huashan*. Meanwhile, Zhuli Xiaojie, despite her half male and half female upbringing, looks like a typical *qingyi*, indicating her status and relying on the actor's skill to show her *huadan* leading *huashan* personality.

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<sup>401</sup> Bonds 31.

Although makeup in these adaptations was for the most part straightforward in terms of *jingju* tradition, there are specific cases in which makeup played a large part in visually indicating specifically who the character was. Chounu from *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou* is a prime example. Dong Hongsong not only relied on his creation of physical deformation to portray Chounu's deformities, but also on his make up to show Chounu's facial deformities. In *Shengmuyuan*, Dong's specific *hualian* makeup, or *lianpu*, was light, forcing him to physically change his face and keep it for the entire show. In *Qingshang zhonglou*, however, the makeup changed radically and embraced the combination of *hualian* and *chou*, with the entire face covered in a skewed and lopsided design that emphasized the physical ugliness of the character, while also making sure that he looked beautiful.

### Music

As stated above, and throughout this dissertation, music is an essential part of *jingju* performance, so much so that audiences, as Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak writes, come to "listen to theatre"<sup>402</sup> as much as they come to watch it. Music, both vocal and aural, is a major building block in creating total theatrical experiences for audiences, no matter which country or culture they are in. For these adaptations, composers combined Chinese and Western musical conventions into their scores, experimenting with rhythms, modes, and modal systems to further embrace the new characters and new stories. Yang Nailin, the composer for *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou*, for example, used Romani, Central Asian, and Chinese folk music to embrace Ailiya's sweetness and foreignness. Meanwhile, music is used in *Fushide* to create a magical and eerie atmosphere. Mo Fei's first entrance is to spoken, *a capella* percussion, unusual in a live performance, helping to suggest that this character is not from this world. Throughout

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<sup>402</sup> Wichmann "Listening" 1.

the rest of the play, Western instruments are used to enhance the *jingju* orchestra, which played for the vocal portions of the production. When combined, the *jingju* and Western orchestras established a weird, eerie atmosphere that only enhanced the magical *qing* of the original play and legend.

Characterization was also developed through the creation of arias that embody the newly created characters on a heightened level. Music in *jingju* is a constant, but the role it plays when sung is especially important because it conveys heightened emotions, thus letting audiences into the characters psyche. An example of arias helping audiences to understand a character's psyche is in *Xiaoli zhisi* performed by Yan Qinggu in Shanghai. While many of the arias created for Yue Dianshi are relatively short, they reveal a level of anxiety that words cannot achieve on their own. With the use of a variety of different tempos, modes, and modal systems, the creative team is able to capture Yu's anxiety about embarrassing himself and his superiors through humor.

### **Theoretical Measures**

#### **Individual Performances**

Some of these adaptations were created with the idea that international productions were a distinct possibility. In such cases, creative teams often reduced or removed elements such as singing to make sure that international audiences, especially those who were not familiar with *jingju*, could still understand the story.

The dynamics within each Creative team played a major role in each creative process. For instance, the Creative team for Zhuli Xiaojie worked together relatively harmoniously, but perhaps because of the lack of debate, created a production that lost a lot of Strindberg's original intention and the thought behind his words. On the other hand, debate and disagreement among members of the creative team for *Fushide* almost completely dominated the creative process, but

they created a production that not only performed well in China, but also in Germany and Italy. In my view, *Fushide* was also the most successful of the productions studied in sparking an interest in China among foreign audiences, and in *jingju* among all audiences. This could have been due in part to the outstanding quality of the companies participating, as well as the international flavor of the performance itself—it was intended to appeal to a wider range of audiences, rather than focusing primarily on one type of audience, and succeeded in doing so.

### Jingju as a National Art Form

For the most part, the reviews for all of these productions were favorable, praising them for drawing in more audiences to see *jingju* performances, even though some of them were not presented outside China. For me, the reviews for *Fushide* are the most telling. The audience for one particular performance of *Fushide* in Italy consisted of both Chinese and Italian members, including some members of the Chinese and Italian governments who praised the international cooperation between the NCJP and ERTF and hoped that more joint ventures like *Fushide* would be undertaken in the future. Meanwhile, Italian audience members praised the performance for bringing them to China because they would never get to go themselves.<sup>403</sup>

*Shengmuyuan/Qingshang zhonglou*, on the other hand inadvertently brought the Chinese government's policies of oppression of the Chinese minorities are currently on the front pages of humanitarian websites, and the problematic portrayal of Ailiya, even though she is the main character in *Shengmuyuan/Qingshang zhonglou*, does little to alleviate those concerns for international audiences.

China plays a much larger and more active role in international politics than it did at the time of Mei Lanfang's tours, so it is entirely possible that these performances may have little to

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<sup>403</sup> J. Guo 5

no effect on how China is viewed internationally. However, I would argue that these performances do have an international impact, and that they help to increase *jingju*'s audience base, both in age and in international composition. Furthermore, they demonstrate exactly what every artist stressed to me: *jingju* conventions are meant to be pushed, and this helps *jingju* to grow.

### Marketing Jingju Internationally

The advent of certain technologies, such as WeChat, also allowed some marketing to become virtual, thus making the Minister of Culture's directive easier to achieve. Each company and some individual actors created newsfeeds for themselves to advertise themselves and their work. I found that many reviews and announcements of upcoming international performances of *Fushide* were from Liu Dake's personal feed, while Shi Yihong uses her newsfeed to post articles about herself and her performances, including *Shengmuyuan* and *Qingshang zhonglou*. Yan Qinggu also uses his feed to post articles, advertisements, and pictures from his outreach work with schools around the country. Companies, schools and organizations, such as the Mei Lanfang Grand Theatre, the Shanghai *Jingju* Company, and Qinghua University, all manage their feeds to advertise upcoming performances, and these advertisements were also available in hardcopy flyers at their locations. The use of apps like WeChat made companies, actors, and organizations more accessible to younger audiences, who spend a good deal of time on their phones. Taking advantage of the available technology and making information easily accessible to a younger audience and people who might otherwise not be attracted to a *jingju* performance shows a marketing savvy that also demonstrates a movement with the times. Other organizations and companies have now come to the same realization that the Shanghai *Jingju* Company came to in the 1990s, which is that they must not only continue to appeal to their traditional, older,

audiences, but must also bring in younger audiences in order to revitalize and sustain the art form.

### **Further Study**

What is the future for *jingju* adaptations of Western literature in China? Is it possible to answer this question? At the moment, it seems as if companies are not producing as many adaptations as they were in the very beginning of the century. This is perhaps not surprising considering the amount of time required to create and produce one adaptation relative to the time it takes to produce a traditional piece and given the tightening of resources in the arts in general. However, there are further studies that could be undertaken to further understand the value and impact of adaptations, and perhaps even support the need for more of them.

First, a more in-depth study of audience reactions would be beneficial to judging just how successful, or unsuccessful, these adaptations actually were. Knowledge of just who came to watch these performances, and their ages, would provide a more complete picture of who the adaptations appeal to; to what extent did they draw college students as opposed to older, educated members of society.

Second, a deeper study in how Marvin Carlson's Seven Intercultural Relationships can be used to analyze final performances from the point of view of non-Chinese audiences. Added to the analysis of the Chinese audiences, it will provide a more complete picture of how *jingju* is being promoted internationally.

Third, studies of adaptations from other genres, such as Puccini's *Turandot* by the National China *Jingju* Company, might expand our understanding of how original sources beyond spoken plays and legends can be adapted into *jingju*, lending more credence to Dong Hongsong's assertion that *jingju* is fully absorbent. A specific study on Puccini's *Turandot*

would be illuminating in other ways as well, considering that the original is an opera which portrays the Chinese through a stereotypical lens.

Finally, a study of the performance of difference, both ethnic and physical, through *jingju* convention might lead to greater understanding of both the expressive capacity of *jingju* and of how Han Chinese do and might portray minorities and people with disabilities. During a time in which being different is not regarded as an advantage, how can the *jingju* community step up in either direction? *Jingju* portrayals of minorities, at least in *Shengmuyuan/Qingshang zhonglou*, look to conflate the minority groups, to portray them not as individuals, but as one group that can become commodified. A part of this future study might be how to prevent that from happening.

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